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THE TWO IMPOSTORS

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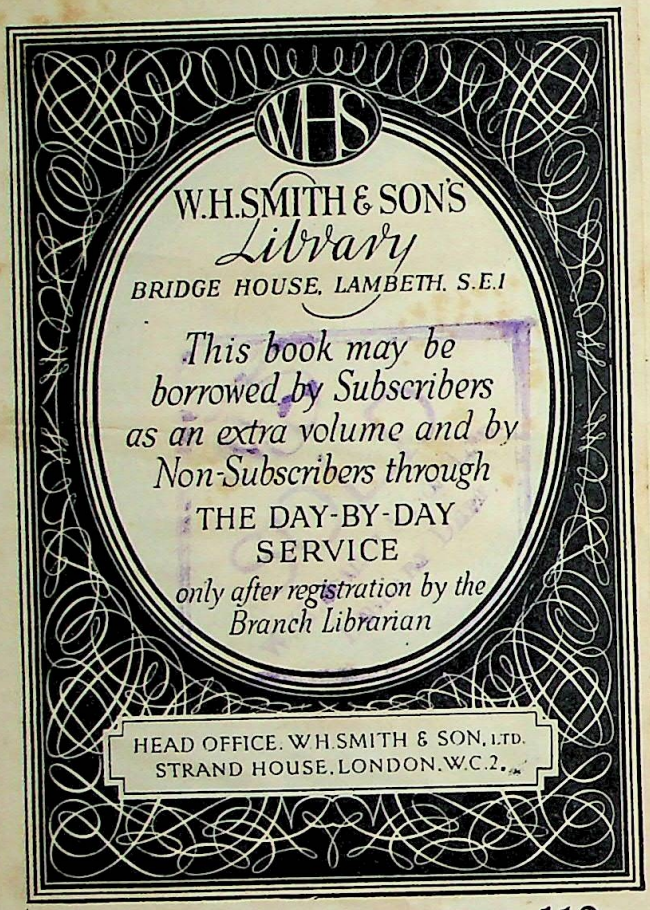

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By the Same Author

Published by John Murray

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THE LAST OF THE EMPRESSES
THE TWILIGHT OF THE KINGS
PRINCESS IN TARTARY

Published by Methuen

THE MAKER OF HEAVENLY TROUSERS
THE GATE OF HAPPY SPARROWS
THE TEMPLE OF COSTLY EXPERIENCE
THE DOGE'S RING

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THE ARCH OF TITUS

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THE TWO IMPOSTORS

DANIELE VARÈ

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same.
RUDYARD KIPLING—*IF.*

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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In every boy there is a dreamer that the man survives.
To the dreamer that I was, and others with me, this book is dedicated.

FIRST EDITION . . . 1949

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BUTLER AND TANNER LTD., FROME AND LONDON

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PREFACE

Hier sitze ich, forme Menschen
Nach meinem Bilde,
Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei . . .[1]

GOETHE, *Prometheus.*

WHILE talking to the faithful Eckermann about the works of contemporary writers, Goethe returned frequently to the distinction between the flesh and the spirit, the outer form and the inner meaning, *das Aussere und das Innere.* The first comprises the narrative, the descriptions, the historical background, the plot of the romance (if it is a romance), the essential unity of the drama. *Das Innere* is the revelation of the author's inner self, the spirit of the man that gives to his work the breath of life; his character, his culture, his religion, his very soul.

An author can open the door to this Inner Shrine in various ways. But the most difficult is by writing Memoirs. You can reveal much more about yourself by writing fiction, for only in fiction can you be honest.

When telling a story, or presenting a play, it often happens that the writer, himself, acts a part. Sometimes he is only pretending to do so, but—like Hamlet—is very near being what he acts. Pirandello juggled with this theme, playing tricks of mental sleight of hand that left the reader puzzled as to where reality began and where it ended. In imaginative fabrication we can be daring; in autobiography we must be reticent, if only out of respect for other people. Sometimes we must be content to be judged by our omissions, and follow the running chronicle of our lives, with much left out.

When you write Memoirs (and nowadays, this has become a minor industry !), it is like showing people over your house and garden. You linger, perhaps, before a picture, or to point out some pleasing prospect, and then you go on to the stables, to give carrots to the horses. And whereas you may live modestly, as I do, your Memoirs can be laid out in stately dignity, like the grounds of Versailles.

Some day, perhaps, when I am quite old, with one foot in flannel

[1] Here I sit and shape men after my image, a race that shall be like me.

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and the other in the grave, I will attempt a portrait in the grand manner, and present myself to posterity, as Edmund Gosse once put it, in a tight frock-coat, with a glass of water in my hand and one elbow on a desk, preparing to say: 'Ladies and Gentlemen!'

For a few years more, let me write as I have always written, dwelling on the little things as on the big, even if I seem to show an imperfect sense of proportion.

In that little masterpiece, *The Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, by George Cavendish, written (but not published) in 1557, the biographer occasionally hunts very small game, as when he says: "The Bishop of Carlisle, being with him on his barge, said unto him, wiping the sweat from his face—'Sir, it is a very hot day!'"

Such endearing pen-strokes bring Wolsey and his times nearer to me than the mighty struggle between Henry VIII and Rome. It is as if, against the Tudor background, these trivialities acquired something of the majesty of the History of England!

* * *

I was not yet in my teens, when I first began to spoil good sheets of paper with compilations of my own, and sometimes I would go to a neighbouring printing-press and have these fragments set up in type. One of them bore the pretentious title of *La Musica*. A few days after it had come back from the printer, Mother took me to the Quirinal, to see Queen Margherita. There were no lifts in the Palace in those days, and while we were mounting the shallow, red-carpeted steps of the spiral staircase, I wondered how I could justify myself in offering to the Queen a copy of the poem that I fingered in my pocket. Fortunately, she asked me what I had been doing lately, and this gave me the required opening.

In our family and in my generation, there were two of us with literary proclivities. The other was my cousin, Patrick Chalmers of Aldbar. I had the advantage over him of being able to write in several languages. But he revealed more of *das Innere* in his brief poems than I in my lengthy prose. Anyhow, I like to think that sometimes, when not wasting time on politics, both of us could catch an echo of the Pipes of Pan.

D. V.

ROME, 1949

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PART I

ITALY WITHOUT TEARS

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A Singer in the Night

Houses are no longer built with windows like that, so high and set in such thick walls ; windows that might almost be embrasures through which cannon are pointed. The outer frame was of granite —or so I seem to remember—and the woodwork was painted a bluish grey, picked out with gold, as were the inner shutters. I saw them by the light of an oil-lamp that stood on a table, not far from the window.

I can recollect nothing about the house itself, not even in what town it could have been. Somewhere in Italy, of course. A hill-town, I should say, for one looked out over tiled roofs towards the countryside. There was an open space just opposite—a piazza probably—and the view from the window was such as you might have in Siena, from the Chigi palace. But it was not Siena ; of that I am almost sure, though I could not explain why.

My father was standing near the window : a tall man with grey hair. We had arrived in that town, whatever it was, in the evening, and I had been put to bed after a supper of bread and milk. The bed was a large one for so small a child, and placed in a corner of the room, far from the window. It must have been summer-time, for the window was wide open. When the noise woke me, my mother came and took me up and held me in her arms, wrapped in a blanket. What had woken me was the sound of shouting. It came from the street below. They were shouting for Tamagno, the tenor, to show himself at another window, or balcony, on the same floor as we were on. He had been singing at the Opera, and had just come home.

The crowd kept on shouting and clapping, till at last Tamagno stepped out on a balcony. And then he sang again.

I could not see him ; only hear his voice pealing out into the night. Lights appeared at the windows, first near by, then further off. Above the roofs, the stars were shining. They seemed very near, as if they too had lit up at the sound of that Homeric voice.

That is all : the open window, at which my father was standing ;

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the darkness outside, and the song. I must have fallen asleep before it ended, my head resting on my mother's shoulder, as she held me in her arms.

First Journey (with a glimpse of Louis Pasteur)

Two opposing laws seem to me now in contest. The one, a law of blood and death, opening out each day new modes of destruction, forces nations to be always ready for the battle. The other, a law of peace, work and health, whose only aim is to deliver man from the calamities which beset him. The one seeks violent conquests, the other the relief of mankind. The one places a single life above all victories, the other sacrifices hundreds of thousands of lives to the ambition of a single individual. The law of which we are the instruments strives even through carnage to cure the wounds due to the law of war. . . . Which of these two laws will prevail, God only knows. But of this we may be sure, that science, in obeying the law of humanity, will always labour to enlarge the frontiers of life.

The above quotation is taken from the inaugural address, pronounced by Pasteur, at the opening of the Institution in Paris to which he gave his name. It is not out of place in these Memoirs of mine, for I am now one of the few persons living who have seen Pasteur himself give an injection as a preventive of rabies. True, I was only five years old at the time, and the episode occurred during my first journey. I have a vivid recollection of it, because it nearly scared me into fits !

This is how it happened.

My father died in 1884, when I was four years old, and Mother and I continued to live in Rome, at the Palazzo Poli. But soon, Mother herself fell ill. After which we went to live in England, to be near her relations.

We were met in Paris by a brother-in-law of Mother's, William Finlay, who was a doctor and practised in Edinburgh. He was a colleague of Doctor Joseph Bell, the original Sherlock Holmes.

My Uncle William seized the opportunity of his journey to Paris, to see something of a certain French doctor, who was supposed to have discovered a way of preventing rabies in people that had been bitten by a mad dog. Why a little boy, like myself, should have been taken along on this occasion, I cannot imagine, unless it was

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that, my mother being ill, there was no one with whom I could be left. Anyway, my Uncle William and I went together to what may have been a kind of specialized medical aid station : an incredibly dark and dingy place, where everyone went in and out as they liked.[1]

This is what I remember.

A big, square, whitewashed room, with the ceiling in deep shadow. There were about fifteen people in it, none of whom was wearing the white linen overalls that we are now accustomed to see on medical men and their attendants. I am standing near the door and holding my uncle's hand, conscious of the fact that he is not thinking of me at all. To our left is a huge window of rectangular plates of glass, set in a metal frame. A little light comes from it still, but evening is drawing in and the room is lighted by a powerful hanging lamp, with a reflector that directs the rays downwards. Under this lamp, a man with a grey beard is sitting on a low chair (I was going to say : on a straw-bottomed chair, but how could I know what it was made of?). He wears a black coat (a *rédingote*), with coat-tails that fall to the floor. He holds a child by one arm, with no one to assist him in any way. The child is standing between his knees, and he forces it to bend backwards, so as to throw out its chest. It is a little boy, about eight years old, rather fat, and with curly fair hair that is wet with perspiration. The doctor holds a large syringe and is giving an injection in the upper abdomen, while the small patient screams with fright and pain. The other people in the room are looking on, with a puzzled, reluctant interest.

That is all. The scene remained in my mind, because of the child's screams (it was older than I). Unlike my uncle, I was unaware that, with such injections, something new was being born into the world. But perhaps even he had his doubts. Science, and not our moral inadequacy, was still feared by mankind, in those days.

[1] A doctor friend of mine, who in his youth was employed in the anti-rabies institute, founded by the Duke of Oldenburg in St. Petersburg, suggests that the place visited by my uncle and myself must have been a modest experimental laboratory, temporarily lodged in quarters granted to Louis Pasteur by the Municipal Authorities of Paris. He worked there in the years preceding the creation of the ' Institut Pasteur '. There he kept the infected dogs and rabbits, and there again did he make the first daring experiments on human beings, attempting a cure by vaccine, before the special microbe, causing rabies, had yet been isolated.

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Agnès

WHEN Mother and I returned from England to Rome, I was eleven years old. She took an apartment at 118 Via Venti Settembre and introduced me to my father's friends, whom she consulted as to my upbringing. No less a personage than the Minister for Public Instruction, Guido Baccelli, put me to school at the Ginnasio Umberto I and he wrote personally to the 'Preside', Giuseppe Chiarini, pointing out that, having been abroad so long, I might need some coaching in the Italian language.

Meanwhile we acquired a maid and general factotum, one of those domestic treasures, such as appear once in a generation, a combination of Peggoty and *She Who Must Be Obeyed*. Her name was Agnès, and she had been born on the banks of the Neckar, where it enters the plain of the Rhine, between Heidelberg and Mannheim. A willing, honest, single-minded woman, Agnès brought into everything she did the thoroughness (*Gründlichkeit*) that is the result of a German education.

Mother and I had been separated during her long illness; she had lost the habit of looking after me. I have no doubt that she felt much relieved when Agnès assumed towards me, almost as a matter of course, the duties of a nursery governess. This implied a return to childish things, but it was not unwelcome, as bed to a little boy who has been kept up too long at night. Also it was something pleasantly new to feel I was not a mere supernumerary in somebody else's household (as I had been in England), but a person whose present needs and future development were of primary importance. Such unaccustomed consequence was not without its disadvantages, for Agnès, though full of tender solicitude, was determined not to spoil me. She showed herself conscientiously severe in inflicting punishment. But these painful occasions were few and far between. Agnès found in me an outlet for an unsatisfied motherliness. In my own docile acceptance of her domestic discipline, there was a feeling of relaxation. I had been obliged to face difficulties and to fend for myself at too early an age. I now surrendered my will and my person with a grateful submission, which revealed an unconscious nostalgia for the childhood I had almost missed.

Agnès revelled in any form of labour intended to keep the house

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THE AUTHOR'S MOTHER

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swept and garnished. Hers was the passion for method that Heine laughed at, and the *laboriositas* that Leibniz described as characteristic of the Teutonic race. She would kneel by the hour, polishing floors, and she prowled about, with a cloth in one hand and a *piumino* in the other. A *piumino* is a feather duster, mounted on a pliable wand of osier. Dust and cobwebs were pursued by the feathers ; small rugs and cushions were beaten with the osier wand. If Agnès is now in Heaven, I hope they allow her to scrub the golden floor and dust the cushions of the throne that is reserved for the Deity. Or they might give her an extra long *piumino* to sweep away the nebulæ.

From Agnès I got my first grounding in the German language. I learnt songs by Schumann (*Es war im schönsten Monat Mai*, and *Die beide Grenadiere*). These she would sing, in a husky contralto, while cleaning the boots and shoes, on the kitchen balcony that overlooked a little garden. Sometimes, Anna, the cook (an ancient Roman, out of the Trastevere) would be ousted from her domain by the kitchen stove, so that Agnès might prepare *Fasching's Krapfen*, a delicacy that, by rights, should be eaten only at the end of Carnival.

Agnès explained the solar system to me, with the aid of an orange and a knitting needle, but she lacked a classical education and could not help me with my studies. However, she persuaded Mother to engage a *ripetitore* (or ' coach '), for me, a dear old Tuscan schoolmaster. And she kept a watchful eye on my *pagella* (a bi-monthly school report). She expressed delight when this contained good marks and laudatory comments. But when it testified to lapses from grace, she threatened to use the osier wand of the *piumino* on other things beside rugs and cushions.

She also devised a method of ensuring that I should give the necessary attention to my school tasks. She would take me down to the garden, carrying my copy-books, dictionaries and classical texts, and she would immure me in the tool-shed, where we kept disused boxes and bird-cages, and a store of wood for the winter. While locked up in there, I was expected to remedy the lack of diligence of which I had been guilty when at large. I was allowed to take with me a slice or two of cake, to consume while I was shut up. Mother compared my place of confinement to the Castle of Chillon, and myself to François Bonivard, making friends with spiders in a dungeon.

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Though there were times when I found that such humour was misplaced, Agnès's scheme, on the whole, was successful. I did actually study better for being confined in that place of detention.

I was imprisoned in the Castle of Chillon more often, after an English girl, Constance Cazenove, came to stay with us in Rome. Her presence attracted to Mother's drawing-room a bevy of young men, mostly of the hunting set, and others that were attached to the Court. Before long, a love-affair began to develop between Consy and one of the Court officials, the Marchese Ferdinando Guiccioli. During Consy's stay with us, Mother engaged a housemaid to come in by day. This annoyed Agnès, who considered that she could do any amount of extra house-work, unaided. Also she did not get on with 'the help', and for some time was very short in the temper, so that I was frequently in trouble.

One afternoon, while immured in the tool-shed, I heard voices that sounded familiar. Putting down Xenophon's *Anabasis*, I looked out through the small window with its cracked pane of glass, and saw a man and a girl on the path through the tiny orange-grove, near the fountain with the goldfish. It was unusual for any of us to invite visitors into the garden, which we shared with other inmates of the *palazzo*. So I was astonished to see Consy there, together with Guiccioli. He was impeccably dressed, and wore a glossy top-hat, and a tie *en plastron*, with a pin in the shape of an M, studded with tiny diamonds.

I thought for a moment that Agnès might have given them the key, to let me out, and I felt much ashamed of being found in circumstances so suggestive of chastisement. But it was clear that those two had no thought but for each other. They were behaving, it is true, with perfect dignity and decorum, as befitted their times and social position; indeed Ferdinand's declaration took almost the form of a ritual, and he appeared indifferent to the fact that it had begun to rain.

As a rule, only cats met in amorous rendezvous in that patch of garden. But before Agnès came down to liberate me, a proposal of marriage had been made and accepted. The happy couple, all unconscious of having been watched from only a few yards distance, proceeded upstairs. Consy announced her engagement to Mother,

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while Ferdinand hurried off to the Quirinal, to inform Queen Margherita. Apart from my own unseen presence, the episode had been ceremonious and graceful as a minuet.

* * *

I was seventeen when Agnès left us, to go back to her home, near Heidelberg. Her brother, having lost his wife, wanted someone to help look after his farm and his two children. Three years later, after staying a few weeks at Homburg-vor-der-Höhe, Mother and I went to see Agnès on her native heath. She had grown fat and looked prosperous and happy. Her brother's children, a boy and a girl, were pleasant young people, in a Hansel and Gretel sort of way, but shy. I got on better with them, after we had climbed a centuries-old linden-tree together. It stood in a courtyard, and the children told me it had been planted in the time of Luther.

We were given a wonderful repast, with both Rhine-wine and Pilsen. After which, the *Landbauer* showed me over his property, stretching down to willows by the river's bank. There were cows, pigs and ducks, and the still air vibrated to the distant cackle of the successful hen. I almost wished I could stay on there, to be looked after once more by Agnès.

She died in 1912, at the age of seventy, before the era of world wars, conflicting ideologies and will-o'-the wisp promises of a life without fear or want. The part of Germany that was Agnès's home is described in *A Tramp Abroad.* Mark Twain and Mr. Harris sail down the Neckar in a raft, and visit feudal castles, carrying alpen-stocks and wearing muslin tails to their hats, in the tourist-fashion of their day. That was the Germany I first knew : a country of great forests, where lurked—why not ?—the elves of the Nibelungen, and of little square fields where cabbages grew red. Music and beer and romantic legends ; firelight glowing on a blue-tiled stove ; flowered cloth round a feather-bed ; corn and wine and pleasant cities ; Rhine-gold in the women's hair. . . . And, at Christmas Eve, children's voices, flute-like, pure, singing carols under the stars : *' Stille Nacht ! Heilege Nacht ! '*

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'The Gentle Art of Making Enemies'

And the young man's dog went with him.

APOCRYPHA, Tobit v. 16.

A CONTEMPORARY of Agnès in our household at Rome was my dog, Chirillo. Indeed there was a perpetual feud between them. Not a bitter feud, but an agreement to differ.

Chirillo was a Roman *lupetto* and characteristically a *romano de' Roma* in his outlook and general behaviour.

One of the masques that used to figure in Italian comedy was called 'Rugantino'. This was the companion to Harlequin and to Pulcinella. He was supposed to be a representative Roman type, and as such he figured in Punch and Judy shows. The name is derived from the verb *rugà* (in the dialect of Trastevere). It means 'to growl'. And Chirillo was very much in character. He growled on the slightest provocation, and on none at all. And he could vary the expression from a threatening snarl, to a good-humoured protest at delay in taking him out for a walk.

I acquired Chirillo when he was already a full-grown dog, but we had known each other for some time. He belonged to Ettore, the head groom at Pieretti's riding-school and livery stable, where I kept a pony. Chirillo used to come out with me in a dog-cart; it amused him to seize the reins in his teeth and pull them, snarling in well-simulated rage. His master, Ettore, had the offer of a place with Manolo Prinetti, who was leaving for Constantinople and taking his horses with him. In the end, neither Manolo nor his horses ever went to Constantinople, but meanwhile Chirillo had taken up his abode with me, and he stayed on.

But he continued to frequent his old haunts, and often had to be retrieved from the stables, where I would find him disporting himself with his old chum 'Renz', a portly fox-terrier with a permanent stiff neck, which he had acquired by having been put into a fountain of icy-cold water, by some fool stable-boy, who saw him panting after a long run with the horses.

Chirillo only realized that I was indeed his new master when I took him with me for a few days' excursion to Porto d'Anzio on the

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sea. I went to stay there with Augusto Sindici, whose daughter, Magda, had married William Heinemann, the publisher.

Magda was with her mother, in Rome, but Heinemann came down to Anzio, to stay with us, and brought a friend, a thin, angular gentleman with long hair, whose name, at first, I did not catch (he and Heinemann called each other 'Willy' and 'Jimmy'). The stranger had a rather eccentric taste in clothes, and a flippant, sarcastic way of speaking. He and Chirillo disliked each other from the moment they first met. It was a case of hatred at first sight.

'Jimmy' was an artist, and he did a sketch of himself poking Chirillo with his walking-stick, which the latter seized in his teeth, drawing back his lips in a paroxysm of growling. This was one of many similar sketches. It appeared to be a habit of this painter (at least in the few days we were together) of making a drawing of himself every day, and then tearing it up. He signed his sketches—those that he did not tear up—with a W that resembled the outline of a butterfly. Sometimes the resemblance was more pronounced, as if there really were a butterfly in the picture.

The name I saw on his luggage—James McNeill Whistler—meant nothing to me, but he talked to me about George du Maurier, with whom he had lived in Paris. I had just been reading *Peter Ibbetson*, and in this eccentric artist's conversation—witty and satirical as it was—I heard echoes of du Maurier's rose-coloured reminiscence of an older Paris than that which bears the imprint of the Second Empire.

Whistler and I might have got on nicely, if it had not been for Chirillo. He alluded to me, in conversation, as 'the boy with the awful dog'. There was a touch of affectation both in Whistler and in Chirillo. In their hearts, they enjoyed abusing and growling at one another. But one morning, when we should have gone off together for an excursion in a sailing boat, Whistler refused to start, if Chirillo came too. On my part, I refused to abandon Chirillo, so I remained at the Villa, and the others started off across the shallow bay, in the direction of Torre la Stura, on the southern side of Nettuno.

The excursionists returned home about three in the afternoon, extremely sorry for themselves, but thankful to be alive at all.

They had landed on a sandy point, with the intention of taking a

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walk in the pine-woods near the shore, and of consuming the picnic lunch they had brought with them in a hamper. They were sitting, contentedly enough, on the slope of a sandy dune, eating *pagnottelle imbottite* (a kind of glorified sandwich) and drinking the light wine of the Alban hills, when Heinemann noticed a strange erection at the edge of the sea, consisting of some stout beams, supporting a triangle of timber, painted a dirty grey.

'What's that thing?' he asked.

In his youth, Whistler had been at West Point and in the Coast Survey. Such objects were familiar to him. He answered: 'It looks to me like a target for artillery practice.'

Sindici was an old soldier, who had fought in the battle of Solferino, and he nodded, with his mouth full. 'That's just what it is,' he began. 'A regiment of artillery is quartered down here, and they use this spit of land for . . .'

A strange, whining sound broke the silence of that desolate sea-shore. Then came a thud and an explosion, which sent barrelfuls of sand over the landscape and the luncheon-party. Artillery practice had begun!

The dauntless three rose to their feet. They did not stop to collect the eatables, or the drinks, but ran heavily over the sand in the direction of the pine-woods. They had hardly covered twenty yards, when again there came that ominous whine and a sickening thud. Again they were half buried under mountains of sand. This time, the shell exploded twenty yards before them in the direction in which they were proceeding.

Heinemann was for doubling back, but Sindici knew more about it, and he urged them forward. 'It's all right!' he gasped. 'They are finding the range. The next one will explode behind us.'

So it did. The party reached the shelter of the pine forest and lay down exhausted. After each shot—and they went on for some time—there came a rattling sound against the trunks of the trees. A new type of shrapnel was being tried out, and that was the tap of half-spent bullets.

After two hours, the firing ceased. The excursionists rose up and made their way back to their boat, which was slightly damaged by a bullet-hole or two. A sentinel saw them in the distance and shouted

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to them that they must not enter the danger zone. When he discovered that they had been in it all the time, he decided not to say anything about it, or he might have got into trouble himself.

Butterflies under the Arch of Titus

> Non curioso a te delle piccole cose io vengo
> chi le farfalle cerca sotto l'Arco di Tito ?
>
> CARDUCCI, *Roma.*

WHEN I went to school at the Ginnasio-Liceo Umberto I, in Rome, the 'Preside' (or Head), Giuseppe Chiarini, was a scholar and litterateur of some renown, author of the *Studi Shakespeariani*. He did much to make known to his nationals the foreign literary masterpieces, both German and English. Before his day, Italians did not read many foreign books ; they were content with the latest French novel.

Chiarini took a kindly interest in me, and did not cease to do so when he left the 'Umberto I' to direct a department in the Ministry of Public Instruction. He encouraged me to attempt translations from English into Italian, and even suggested I should put Gray's *Elegy* into Italian verse. I did so, not very successfully, and with his help. It was he who pointed out to me the resemblance between 'The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day', and the verses in the Eighth Canto of Dante's *Purgatorio* :

> *. . . squilla di lontano*
> *Che paja'l giorno pianger, che si muore.*

One Saturday afternoon (I must have been about fifteen at the time), I went to a thought-reading séance, by a magician or illusionist, at the Salone Margherita, in the Via Due Macelli. And I found myself in a row of seats just behind Chiarini, who was in the company of a robust-looking man with a ruddy countenance and an abundant crop of iron-grey hair, matched by a bushy beard. We got into conversation, and I was introduced to this gentleman, who was no other than the poet, Giosuè Carducci, a Nobel prize-winner for literature. During the thought-reading performance (of which I remember nothing), Carducci was invited to go on the stage, where

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he sat looking rather sheepish. Meanwhile Chiarini mentioned to me that the poet and he were going next morning (it being a holiday) for a walk in the Forum. Would I care to join them there, about eleven o'clock?

Next day was fine and sunny. I was on the spot long before my time, waiting, as we had arranged, opposite the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina. I sat down on a fallen column, at the side of the Via Sacra, where wild clover and yellow arnica grew between the time-worn flags. For foreign tourists, the Forum is 'one of the sights'. For us, who live in Rome, it is part of our lives. Young couples meet there, children play, and old men doze in the sun on the steps of the Basilica Julia, where once the charioteers and litter-bearers waited for their masters. You can trace, on those marble steps, certain chiselled lines representing a draught-board, or the preliminary marking for 'Noughts and Crosses', where idle men killed time with a game or two. No doubt that, in their day, as in ours, fat lizards made the most of the last warm days in October, to bask on sun-warmed bricks. And possibly, at the foot of the *rostra*, a cat may have brought out her family of kittens to enjoy the air, as a tortoiseshell pussy was doing on that morning in 1895.

The cat family, so I discovered, had their quarters in a small vaulted room, behind a doorway curtained with ivy, close to the Temple of Romulus, son of Maxentius. Close by, a pile of fragments was topped by an age-scarred piece of white marble, on which was sculptured, in bas-relief, the figure of a girl. Only the lower half of the figure remained, for the marble was broken at the height of the thighs. A pair of slim, bare legs were visible, under a swirl of draperies that lifted as she danced. The modelling of those feet was delightful; they looked so light-hearted and happy! No doubt that they were dancing (and must have been doing so, throughout the history of Rome).

I pointed out those little feet to Carducci and Chiarini, when they turned up. Something of my own interest must have infected them, for they stood there, speculating as to where the fragment might have come from. Possibly it was once part of a frieze in the Golden House of Nero, high up near the cornice of a banqueting hall.

Then we strolled up the slope, towards the Arch of Titus.

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In Carducci's ode, *Roma*, inspired by the grandeur that was Rome, there is a famous verse, in which the poet disdains any curiosity as to the little, transient things of life. He asks : " Who would look for butterflies under the Arch of Titus ? "

Chiarini recalled this verse, as we approached the arch, where it stands proudly, on the rising ground between the Colosseum and the Forum. And sure enough there *were* some butterflies fluttering among the ruins on the slope up to the Palatine and through the arch, where are the bas-reliefs of Roman soldiers carrying the seven-branched candlestick that came from the Temple at Jerusalem.

I am more inclined now than I was then to philosophize over Carducci's simile of the butterflies and I am inclined to disagree with him ! Small personal incidents often interest us more than big events. Who would remember the harvest gathered in by the reapers of Boaz, were it not for the gleanings of Ruth that followed after ? In his *Apology for Idlers*, R. L. Stevenson quotes Saint Beuve who, as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a single book in which to study for a few years, ere we go hence ; and it seemed to him all one whether you should read in Chapter XX, which is the differential calculus, or in Chapter XXXIX, which is hearing the band play in the gardens.

I had not, when fifteen years old, the knowledge and the book-learning fully to appreciate our national poet. But I knew his fame. And I gazed with awe at the man who had put into verse so much of contemporary Italian thought and feeling, and so much of the greatness of our past. Carducci was part of Italy's resurrection, no less than Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi. Of his ode on Clitumnus (*Alle Fonti del Clitunno*), Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch said ' few nobler poems have adorned our time '. And he describes that poem in his own book *On the Art of Writing* :

> He (Carducci) visited the beautiful, everlasting source, and of what did he sing. . . . He sang of the weeping willow, the ilex, ivy, cypress and the presence of the god still immanent among them. He sang of Umbria, of the ensigns of Rome, of Hannibal swooping down over the Alps ; he sang of the nuptials of Janus and Comesena, progenitors of the Italian people ; of nymphs, naiads, and the moonlight dance of Oreads ; of flocks descending to the river at dusk ; of the homestead, the barefooted mother, the clinging

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child, the father, clad in goat-skins, guiding the ox-wagon; and he ends on the very note of Virgil's famous apostrophe

Sed neque Medorum silvae, ditissima terra . . .

with an invocation to Italy—Italy, mother of bullocks for agriculture, of wild colts for battle, of corn and of the vine, Roman mother of enduring laws and mediaeval mother of illustrious arts. The mountains, woods and waters of green Umbria applaud the song, and across their applause is heard the whistle of the railway-train bearing promise of new industries and a new national life.

E tu, pia madre di giovenchi invitti
a franger glebe e rintegrar maggesi
e d'annitrenti in guerra aspri polledri
Italia madre,

madre di biade e viti e leggi eterne
ed incliti arti a raddolcir la vita,
salve! a te i canti de l'antica lode
io rinnovello.

Plaudono i monti al carme e i boschi e l'acque
de l'Umbria verde: in faccia a noi fumando
ed anelando nuove industrie in corsa
fischia il vapore.[1]

Reapers in the Moonlight

THERE is an episode of my childhood that would not be worth recording, were it not that it had a sequel after I had grown up and begun a diplomatic career. It is as if a melody that I had known when I was a little boy had been interrupted, and concluded only when I was a lively Attaché of twenty-seven.

Sometimes, in the summer months, I used to be asked to stay with Romeo Gallenga, at Mandoleto, near Perugia, on the road to Lake Trasimene. Romeo and I were of the same age, and we must have been eleven, or twelve, when we started to pass a month of June together, with no one to look after us but Nazareno, the coachman, and his wife, Lucia.

[1] And thou, pious mother of bullocks, unequalled for breaking the glebe and restoring the fallow, and of rough colts, neighing in battle—Italy mother.

Mother of corn and vine and laws eternal, and noble arts our life to sweeten. *Salve!* To thee I renew the songs of ancient homage.

The song is hailed by the applauding mountains, the woods and waters of green Umbria: there, before us, smoking and panting for new industries, whistles the train.

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This unaccustomed, but to us entirely satisfactory, situation had arisen in consequence of the fact that the Signora Gallenga herself stayed on in Perugia, in her beautiful Palazzo, whereas Romeo and I were sent out to the country-house, as being more healthy for two rapidly growing little boys. It would have been absurd to have kept open a huge villa, for the benefit of a couple of ragamuffins like us ; so we were given a nice, cool bedroom in the building that contained the stables, and where Nazareno and Lucia also dwelt. They looked after us, or tried to. The Signora Gallenga sacrificed her comfort by this arrangement, for she deprived herself of her coachman, and therefore of the carriage and pair. She had to be content with a *biroccino*, a rustic conveyance, driven by a groom. Sometimes she drove out to see us, and at last was so horrified at our appearance and conduct that she decided to hasten her own arrival at the Villa by a few weeks. Even so, Romeo and I went native for a month or more.

I remember those days with feelings of amazement, nostalgia and pride. Never again was I destined to live so close to Nature and to the land. Romeo, who in later days became a real dandy, insisted on going about barefoot like the peasant children. To be able to do this, the soles of your feet must be hardened by constant contact with mother earth. I was less advanced than he in this respect, but I made up for it by an even greater neglect of my personal appearance. Romeo and I might have passed for Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. We never wore more than an old pair of pants, held up by one brace, and an old cotton shirt. The more rents and patches there were in these garments, the more we liked them. After some futile attempts to keep us clean and tidy, Lucia gave it up as a bad job. We were indistinguishable from the peasant children on the hillside.

In one of the neighbouring farms, or *fattorie*, a couple of foreigners were rusticating in the hot Umbrian summer. We heard them spoken of as *i due forestieri*, and we did not take the trouble to enquire who they were, or whence they came. We thought they might be Germans, but later we discovered that they were Austrians. Romeo and I were much impressed by their good looks, for they were typical examples of a nordic beauty. He might have posed as Lohengrin, and she as Elsa. The fact that they were not man and wife meant little to Romeo and me. We passed an occasional afternoon in their

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company, and they learnt some Italian from us. I remember his asking me how we said 'reapers'. I answered '*mietitori*' and he repeated to himself: '*Mietitori al chiar di luna.*' 'Reapers in the moonlight!'

This was because, down in the plain, the reaping was done at night, by the light of the full moon, which pleased the lovers enormously. They insisted on going down to help fill the granaries. Their clumsy efforts to bind the corn into sheaves were not much help to anybody, but they looked so happy that the hard-working peasants could not but grin appreciatively.

Sometimes, while they reaped, the peasants would sing. Their voices mingled with the song of the crickets in the willow-trees, along the irrigation-ditches. Fireflies rose from the stubble, and in the distance, blue hills, only a shade darker than the sky, were starred with white villages, ghostly in the moonlight.

'*Dans ton cœur dort un clair de lune!*'

I remember his whispering these words to her, as they passed close to me, with their arms full of corn-sheaves. A quotation, evidently, but I did not know where from.

* * *

Now let us pick up the scent again, further on . . .

It concerns what you might call my first diplomatic mission. And there is something almost symbolical in it, for the interests in my life have centred round three things: Italian emigrants abroad, animals, and beautiful women. There is a little in this story of all three.

The emigrants that I was instructed to help were Italians, but not human beings. They were cows. A question had arisen concerning the rights of pasturage in the Alpine valleys of the Dolomites. During many centuries, such matters had been regulated to the satisfaction of all concerned, by the so-called *Regole Cadorine*, local regulations dictated by a long experience. The number of cows that might be put out to graze in each valley was carefully considered, so that the pastures should not be overstocked during the summer months, when the herds came up from Venetia, to grow fat on the rich clover and lush grass, on the borders of mountain torrents.

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But since the year 1866, there was a political frontier half-way up the mountain valleys, and almost every summer this caused trouble to the Italian cows. I imagined them mooing pathetically, to be allowed to pass the black and yellow barriers under the Marmolada and the Tre Cime di Lavaredo.

On one occasion, the First Secretary of the Embassy told me to go round to the Ministry of Agriculture, and see what I could do about it.

The Ministry of Agriculture, in Vienna, was situated not far from where I lived, in the Dominikaner Bastei. In due course I was ushered into a waiting-room, decorated with portraits of the Habsburg Emperors. A young official came to enquire the nature of my errand. The *Sekstionschef* competent to deal with my case (or that of the cows) was absent. The underlings who worked with him were not considered worthy to discuss the matter with the representative (however junior) of a foreign embassy. So it was decided that I should be received by the Under Secretary of State. Would I have the kindness to wait a few minutes, till he should be free?

So I sat on a sofa upholstered in green plush, and waited.

The name of the Under Secretary was familiar to me, though I had never met him. He was to have dined at our embassy a week or so before, and at the last moment had failed to turn up. His wife had come without him. This had caused me much mental agitation, as I was responsible for placing the guests at dinner. The last-minute alterations had not been satisfactory and my Ambassador had expressed disapproval. The Under Secretary's *Frau Gemahlin*, however, had enjoyed herself. She was a fat, comfortable-looking woman, with grey hair and rosy cheeks, and might have been handsome, except for a too-prominent nose. She was a jovial soul, with a fund of stories that had the genuine Viennese flavour.

I had placed her between a young arch-duke and the British Military Attaché, who was then the Duke of Teck. She kept the arch-duke in fits of laughter, but with the Duke of Teck, who was getting deaf, she had less success. I was just near enough to be able to catch a phrase or two, without being able to follow all that was said. During a lull in the general conversation, I gathered that she was describing a festival at the Capucine monastery in Linz, which her husband had

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attended in his official capacity. Some pretty girls had danced the peasant-dances of Ober Oesterreich, and His Excellency had admired them so much that he had paid scant attention to the local authorities who were there to receive him.

The arch-duke remarked: 'You should keep your husband in better order, *Gnädige Frau*!'

'My husband has a roving eye for a pretty woman. What can you expect, when his wife has a nose like mine?'

The arch-duke laughed and said something I did not catch for talk had broken out again along the dining-table. I asked the Councillor of the French Embassy, who was sitting near me, if he could tell me anything about the Under Secretary for Agriculture. His answer was contemptuous: 'A typical character out of Viennese operette. A *Zigeunerbaron*, whose love affairs keep perfect waltz-time. His wife offers comic relief.'

While I waited in His Excellency's anteroom, I wondered if I would find out what all this meant.

A few minutes later, I found myself in the presence of a good-looking man of about fifty, with fair hair that was turning grey and weary grey eyes. I could see nothing in him to remind me of Viennese operette, and certainly nothing gipsy-like (to justify the term *Zigeunerbaron*). Indeed, he was the typical Austrian official of the best class, stiff in manner, precise in speech, and hiding a touch of arrogance under a formal courtesy.

What struck me immediately was that I had met this man before. But I could not remember where, and there was no sign of recognition in his greeting. The effort to recall where and when I had met him in the past almost made me forget the matter in hand, and it was with some hesitation that I presented my case. I kept on thinking that not only his face was familiar. His voice, his gestures, a little trick of smoothing down his hair while talking: all these things I remembered.

His Excellency was very polite, very suave, full of apologies for the delay, but apparently there was a hitch. This was not due to any alarm of foot-and-mouth disease, but to some disagreement between the local authorities. But he hoped that, in a week or two, before the harvest . . .

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The harvest! That gave me the clue I had been hunting for, and without thinking, I said out loud: '*Mietitori al chiar di luna!*'

His Excellency was puzzled. Evidently, he spoke some Italian, for he answered: 'Reapers . . . ? No. They are herdsmen, coming to the higher pasturage.'

I murmured softly: '*Dans ton cœur dort un clair de lune.*'

He started, as if something had stung him.

'Who are you?'

The question rang like a pistol-shot. The man's face had grown tense and pale. Even his eyes changed colour, and from grey they became almost white, as if from some hidden fire.

I pointed carelessly to the visiting-card that was lying on his desk, and answered: 'That is my name.'

'Yes . . . But . . . how do you know?'

'I was one of the little boys you used to talk to at the *fattoria*.'

'Little boys! What boys? There were only some barefooted peasant children.'

'We went barefoot, certainly. But one of us was heir to the land, not to mention a Renaissance palace in Perugia.'

I meant Romeo, but His Excellency may have thought I was speaking of myself. He said nothing more, only got up from his chair and went and stared out of the window, while his fingers drummed gently on the panes. I could guess that it was not a Viennese street that he saw at that moment, nor the distant spire of the Stephansdom. More likely, the plain between Perugia and Assisi, a group of farm-houses on the hillside, and against the Raphaelite background of distant hills, a woman's face, fair, sweet, and gentle . . .

He seemed to be talking more to himself than to me (indeed he had his back to me), when he said: 'If you have been a lover in Italy, when you were young, it is as if you felt the pulse of the world throb through the fragrant earth in measure with the beating of your heart . . .'

He turned back to his desk, and stared down at me with a look that was slightly quizzical. 'I seem to remember,' he said, 'that there was a dog there, a *lupetto*, that used to growl at me when I patted him. . . .'

It was my turn to be surprised, and I exclaimed: 'So there was!

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And to think that I should have forgotten him ! That was my dog, Chirillo.' And I added : ' What has happened to . . . ?' I had meant to ask what had happened to the lady. But perhaps it was tactless to enquire. However, he understood and answered the unfinished question :

' There is a reaper, and his name is Death. He cuts down the corn and the flowers that grow between.'

It ended that the cows got over the frontier to their pasturage.

The French Councillor had been right : lovers and moonlight and a peasant chorus. Lehar might have set it all to music.

Calling up the Carriages

I BEGAN going out in society much too early in life. My *début dans le grand monde*, or coming-out party, was a ball at the Austrian Embassy to the Quirinal, to which I went with Mother in 1896. The Ambassador was Baron Pasetti. He occupied the first floor of the Palazzo Chigi.

I danced there many times in my youth (when the Austrian Ambassador was Count Lutzow), and I regret that the fine old palace should have been turned into a beehive of offices, even though, in the years 1923–24–25, I occupied one of those offices, myself.

On the occasion of Pasetti's ball, the walls of the long gallery had been decorated, for the occasion, in the Austrian colours. These should have been black and yellow, but to make them less sombre, the black of the *Schwarzgelb* had been substituted by its opposite. White walls were starred with bunches of daffodils. As the King and Queen moved about among the guests, they were preceded by the Embassy Secretaries (Flotow, Dumba, Fürstenberg), who gently persuaded people to make room : ' *De grâce, messieurs et dames, un peu de place pour Leurs Majestés !* '

In the Hall of the Galleys, the dancers were almost swamped in the crowd. I remember a radiant apparition suddenly emerging through a doorway, vivid, arch and eager—the Countess Annina Morosini. And later, a desultory conversation, overheard in the embrasure of a big window. Manolo Prinetti, who was getting very deaf, but would not admit it, asked the Contessa di Santa Fiore :

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THE HON. MURIEL BECKETT, 1912

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'Did you go to the opera last night, Countess?'

'No. I was tired. I went to bed.'

'Were there many people?'

* * *

In those days, there used to be a little lame man in Rome, whose profession it was to call up the carriages of the revellers coming out of dances and receptions, or the Costanzi opera-house. He has disappeared, together with the hostesses of his day. But he left a son, who reigns in his stead. There are fewer dances and receptions now, and people have acquired the habit of parking their own cars. The business is not what it used to be.

But sometimes, when I walk home at night and pass a familiar doorway, I hear in memory the lame man's voice, pealing out along the street, '*La carrozza di Sua Altezza la Principessa Hohenlohe!*' followed, as often as not, by muttered objurgations in the gruff voice of a surly coachman, thankful that his mistress (mentioned in disrespectful terms) has at last condescended to come home: '*Ah! Glie l'ha fatta, quella . . .*'

Only when Mother, on pleasure bent, went out at night, did I hear my own name called out and repeated, as in an echo, down a line of carriages, while men waited in opera hats, and ladies with jewels sparkling in their hair. This inevitable end to our revels seems to have acquired an almost symbolical significance, like a roll-call of the Past.

There is a story that, one evening, when the last guest came out from the Palazzo del Drago, where Mrs. Lee had been giving a dance for her grand-daughters, the lame man was heard to call out ironically: '*Le galosce del Conte de Witten!*'

Pippo de Witten, whose modest equipage consisted in nothing more imposing than a pair of galoshes, was an old bachelor, who never missed a party of any kind; one of those people whose meals seemed to consist principally of 'refreshments', partaken of at crowded buffets, and interrupted by the obligation to bring a glass of lemonade and a sandwich to some weary dowager, chaperoning her daughters. Old de Witten—so a nephew told me—died in harness, that is to say, in his swallow-tailed coat and white tie, having been taken with a stroke, while preparing to go to some reception. Possibly, he was

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putting on his galoshes, when his name was called by a voice that was not that of the little lame man of the carriages. Could it have been Charon, waiting to give him a lift home, across the Styx?

Mrs. Lee's carriage has also been called, and so has that of her sister, Mrs. Hulbert. They lived in Rome for more years than I can count, but not together. It must have been that they both enjoyed society so much, and the pleasure of receiving in one's own house, that they would not divide these joys by sharing them. So Mrs. Hulbert had her own apartment in the Palazzo Sciarra, on the Corso.

Mrs. Lee's daughter, whom I never knew, had married Ernest Beckett (Lord Grimthorpe) and had three children: Lucile, Muriel and Ralph. She died young. Mrs. Lee's principal mission in life was to be a grandmother, and the children were brought up partly by her, when they stayed in her house in Rome, in an American, cosmopolitan atmosphere.

When her grandchildren were there, Mrs. Lee's apartment in the Palazzo del Drago was open to all her friends, and we would go in and out, on one excuse or another, every day and all day.

My own excuses were numerous and varied, but they centred round the youngest granddaughter, Muriel, or 'Moony'.

She was my first love. And I doubt if either of us were ever so happy again, as when we used to meet, in the springtime of the year and of our lives, in the del Drago garden, when noon was on the roses. We shared, as young people do

> The love of higher things and better days
> The unbounded hope and heavenly ignorance
> Of what is called the world and the world's ways.

Does Moony's ghost look over my shoulder, I wonder, as I write these lines? If so, she will smile at the echo of a youthful ardour, in this old man with white hair.

'Never fear, Moony darling! I am not going to claim that you loved me better than you loved Mrs. Lee's adorable puppy, that was always getting into trouble, and howled when it was left at home. When I suggested marriage, you did not agree. And though it is first love that gives the freedom of the city, I might say to you, as Cyrano to Roxane, in the last act:

'Non, non, mon cher amour, je ne vous aimais pas!'

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Marriage has been described as a state of antagonistic collaboration : much too serious a proposition for the likes of us. But it was sweet —April sweet—to be together and enjoy what our world had to offer. We meet again, after all the years, on this page !

In our halcyon days, England and Italy, Paris and Dresden, Lombard lakes and Scottish moors, were one happy playground. And the centre of it all was Rome. What was Rome, to you and me ?

The breath of tall pines round the Piazza di Siena, and daisies underfoot ; roses and lilac in the spring air ; violets nestling in the shade of cork woods ; fumes of incense from the open door of a little chapel. The stately gait of women, carrying burdens on their heads ; splash of water falling into fountains in squares with medieval names ; bells in the steeples, with pigeons flying round them ; little lights at the corners of old palaces, underneath an image of the Madonna ; rust-coloured walls bathed in the afternoon sun ; children selling flowers on the steps of basilicas ; lovers in the straight paths, among the box-hedges of the Villa Medici ; the sheen and coolth, when streets were watered on hot, dusty afternoons ; cats sunning themselves on broken columns in the Forum of Trajan, and being fed by charitable old ladies ; women chaffering at the rag-market in the Campo dei Fiori ; old men watering their plants on roof terraces, while swallows swoop and shrill in the sunset glow.

And rides in the campagna, where the wild thyme was crushed by the hooves of our horses ; excursions to the Alban hills, on donkeys from Albano, to the sacred grove of Ariccia ; home-comings, laden with cyclamen and wild anemones ; other home-comings in the small hours, when the dawn came stealing over the roofs, and the sleeping city had scents and sounds that are unknown during the day.

Rome seemed so small to us then, almost as if it were one house : the squares our own rooms, and the villas our own garden. And yet so big ! Bigger than London, or Paris, or New York . . . for it contained our dreams.

Sad that Italy having brought us together, the next link between Moony and myself should have been a doctor, and his Klinik in Berlin !

Ernst von Leyden was one of a group of German scientists (Senator, Fresiche, von Strumpell, Moebius), who—like their contemporary English surgeons and bacteriologists—created a new epoch

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in medicine and gave their names to various illnesses, for which they discovered a cure. These men were real pioneers, and they made possible the conquests of our present-day virtuosi in the realm of surgery.

I first knew Leyden in December 1899, when I was a student of music in Berlin, and Mother came to see me there. He attended her in a brief illness. At that time, there used to be a bullfinch that fluttered and hopped about his study, sometimes alighting on his shoulder even when he was interviewing a patient. Later on, he was Moony's doctor, and she was devoted to him. He might have saved her, if anyone could. But she went to him, I believe, when other doctors had lost time with ineffective cures.

I went to Berlin to visit her in hospital, but was not allowed to see her, for she had just had an operation. I had to leave again, before she got better. I said something to Leyden about my not having known that he was going to operate. He answered that she herself had insisted on keeping it dark, because her sister was expecting a baby and Moony did not want to cause her anxiety.

In illness, she revealed a strength, indeed a nobility of character that I have seldom seen equalled.

Sparrows in the Chandelier

In Anthony Hope's novel, *Simon Dale*, a young man from the country, in the days of Charles II, comes up to London and meets an enchantress, called Nell Gwyn. In the contest for her favours, he almost becomes a rival of the King himself. Extreme youth and inexperience sometimes find doors open that are shut to wealth and power and worldly wisdom.

If I were to assure the reader that I never was the lover of Lina Cavalieri, he might think the disclaimer unnecessary. But a man of the world would smile and say that I am lying like a gentleman. With this premise, let me tell a story, on the lines of *Simon Dale*.

I have met amiable cynics in my time, but none who equalled Carlo di Rudinì in his disregard for the ordinary reticences of good society. He was the son of the Marchese di Rudinì, one time Italian Prime Minister, and perhaps the wealthiest land-owner in Sicily.

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Carlo's favourite occupation was gambling for incredibly high stakes. A passion for the card-table made all other interests pale by comparison.

Once I met him at the Bar of the Grand Hotel in Rome, and he surprised me by asking casually: 'Would you like to see a photograph of Papà?'

The Marchese di Rudinì had died many years before, and I did not remember that his son, during the old man's lifetime, had shown much filial affection. But I expressed a suitable interest, whereupon Carlo took out his pocket-book and extracted from it a snapshot representing a small and seedy-looking individual, with a squint and side-whiskers.

I protested: 'This man is about half your father's size. And where are his beard and monocle?'

'I never said it was the father you knew. This is another one, a cobbler in Budapesth. He has been kind enough to adopt me. So I call him Papà.'

Carlo and his wife (the daughter of Henry Labouchère) had decided to seek a divorce, and had become temporary citizens of a country where divorce was possible. Carlo had acquired Hungarian nationality, by the simple method of paying a cobbler in Budapesth to adopt him as his son.

I became unexpectedly intimate with Carlo Rudinì many years before his adoption by the Hungarian cobbler. This was after I had been asked to stay with friends at Monte Carlo. My host who, for obvious reasons, must be nameless, was a married man, but—so I was given to understand—did not get on very well with his wife. Nevertheless, when I appeared on the scene, she was expected to arrive from Paris a few days later.

Among the domestic staff was a pretty housemaid, who gave me a friendly warning to clear out, before the châtelaine arrived at Monte Carlo. That house, she told me, was no place for anyone so young as I. Evidently she had some reason to dislike her mistress. She said of her:

'*Elle cherche de se faire pincer en flagrant délit.*'

I have not ventured to translate this phrase, lest I should modify the sense in any way. I was not slow to take the hint. Before my hostess arrived, I had left for the Hôtel de Paris.

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I gave as an excuse that I had some friends there, who wished me to join them. This was true only in part. Carlo di Rudinì was about the last person in the world to desire my company in ordinary times. We moved in different circles.

Carlo was the classical *viveur* of the last century, and he was careful to live up to his legend. He had brought with him to Monte Carlo a girl who, not very long before, had been selling flowers in the streets of Rome (here you have the analogy with Nell Gwyn, who sold oranges in Old Drury). Lina Cavalieri hailed from Viterbo, and was more familiar with the woodcutters' paths on 'the Ciminian Hill' than with byways of the Riviera.

She was in her first youth, and resembled the girl in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, 'Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn.' Her beauty (and in a short time, the fame of her beauty) easily eclipsed that of the bejewelled courtesans (Cléo de Merode, la Belle Otéro, etc.) who queened it in the demi-monde of the Gay Nineties. But when I first met her in Monte Carlo, she was as yet unknown and glad to find in me someone with whom to talk in her native dialect. A bond between us arose, incongruously enough, owing to the fact that we were both rather bored with Monte Carlo. Indeed, had not Carlo introduced me to her and allowed a certain intimacy to grow up between us, I would have left again for Rome. To Lina and to myself, those worldly cosmopolitans appeared dull beyond words! We were not up to their standard and did not want to be. Russian Grand-dukes, North American and South American millionaires, 'mediatized princes' from Germany and Austria, English peers and brewers, Jewish moneylenders, Frenchmen whose names were synonymous with the best chocolate and the most expensive perfumes, Indian rajahs and Scandinavian Kings—they were all very well as a spectacle, and some of the stories about them were amusing, as their mistresses vied with each other in the richness of their toilettes, and the sparkle of their jewels. But they were no fit company for a boy in his teens. And Lina, as yet, did not dare to cope with them.

You might have thought that Carlo Rudinì would object to any close familiarity between myself and the girl whom he had 'launched' so successfully. Instead of which, he encouraged it. At the time, I was puzzled. Now that I am old and worldly-wise, I can guess his

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motive. There were many well-known owners of yachts and villas on the Riviera, who would willingly have carried Lina off from under Carlo's aristocratic nose. To have lost her to some other cut-throat of his own magnitude would have wounded his vanity. But he did not mind if she took a liking for an inexperienced, insignificant Venetian boy, like myself. Indeed, it did not matter to Carlo, even if the *cavalier servente* were to become an *amant du cœur*. These technicalities of gallantry mattered not at all to a cynic of his calibre. What he wanted was that I should keep the girl amused, while he went hunting more profitable game. He was quick to notice that neither Lina nor I were fascinated by the glitter and glamour of our surroundings. And he watched us good-humouredly, as we sat and yawned at a little table at Ciro's (at two in the morning) and agreed between ourselves that the boiled egg which cost 15 francs (three dollars), even though the charge included the privilege of sitting in the same café as the Prince of Wales, tasted not so good as the eggs that in Rome cost a halfpenny each. In that over-heated, cigar-laden atmosphere, we would recall the *porchetta* that one bought off stands in the Piazza Navona, and ate standing in the street, and the artichokes (*carciofi alla giudia*), as they fried them, in oil, in the Ghetto.

I ought to have been going back home, but meanwhile Lina fell ill. It was not much of an illness, and after ten days in bed, she was up and out again, looking lovelier than ever. During those days, the hotel management provided a French nurse to look after her. But Lina did not like the French nurse. She would send me running to the chemist's, to procure medical products, which I need not specify. It ended in my nursing her, myself. Carlo smiled, and raised no objection.

I remember one evening after she got well again. We were all three together, in her bedroom. Lina was seated at the toilet-table, doing something to her hair. Carlo was all ready to go out. I was in an armchair, revelling in the sight of the loveliest bare arms and shoulders, and the beautiful face reflected in the glass.

Lina said she would have a light supper sent up to her room, since Carlo evidently proposed making a night of it, first at the Casino, and later at the Cercle Sportif. He did not want any woman near him, while he was staking huge sums on the turn of a card. Yet

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he could not refrain from a jibe that included both Lina and me. I can see him now, with the little pointed beard that made him look like the satyr that he was, and the mocking smile that showed his white teeth (faun-like, he should have been vine-crowned, to hide his pointed ears !). He stood with a black overcoat over one arm, the lights from candles on the toilet table reflected on the satin lining, as on the white expanse of his shirt-front. And he stared down at us through his monocle.

'Do you know,' he asked, 'what you two remind me of? Of those sparrows that, for some extraordinary reason, have made a temporary home in the chandelier at Ciro's. They hop about under the tables. A schoolboy and a peasant-girl are just as out of place in Monte Carlo !'

I did not answer, nor did Lina. We both felt that the comparison was rather apt. And Carlo concluded :

" Well, good night, both of you. Heaven knows at what time I'll be back. I won't disturb you, Lina. If tomorrow morning we're awake about nine, I'll come in and have breakfast."

With a casual nod, he passed out of the room, humming an air from *Le Roi d'Ys*. And the door closed behind him, and I sat on, still saying nothing, while Lina went on attending to her hair, her eyebrows and her lips. Then she glanced round at me and said :

'You will stay and have supper, won't you, my fellow-sparrow ?'

* * *

Lina married more than once. For a few days, her husband was an American. For a few years, she was the wife of Prince Bariatinsky. When she grew older, she published a book of Mémoirs, called *Le Mie Verità*. I am not mentioned in that book, nor is Carlo di Rudinì.

Not many years ago, I was passing through Rieti, having been on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Santa Rita da Cascia. I stopped for a cup of coffee at the hotel, and noticed a good-looking elderly lady, who had an air of being somebody important. As she passed out, our eyes met, but there was no recognition in them. I asked the porter who she might be, and he answered : 'That was Lina Cavalieri.'

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Besides some property near Rieti, she owned a small villa at Fiesole. She was living there when Florence was bombarded, and there she met her death. Her villa was destroyed, with its inmates.

The Cry of the Children

> And the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
> Than the strong man in his wrath.
>
> ELISABETH B. BROWNING.

An old-fashioned but pleasant magazine that has disappeared from circulation since the days of my youth was *Temple Bar*, once published by Macmillan. The outer cover was of faded rose-colour, illustrated with an engraving of Christopher Wren's gateway, that used to slow down the traffic where Fleet Street meets the Strand, over against the Law Courts. Both gate and magazine have passed away.

In its number for February 1905, *Temple Bar* published a story of mine called 'The Valley of the Bees'. This title veiled, rather than revealed, a subject in which I took a philanthropic interest, when I was a young man, just out of my teens.

Ideals that inspire a lifetime are sometimes born in unaccustomed surroundings. To find the mainspring of endeavour in my public life, I must go back in memory to wanderings that took me far from my habitual environment: to glass-factories in the Valley of the Loire, to railways under construction in the Swiss Alps, and to the highlands of Ethiopia.

An Italian diplomat, the Marchese Raniero Paulucci de Calboli, first drew my attention to the infamous treatment meted out to Italian boys, employed in the French *verreries* in the Departements of the Rhone, the Seine, Puy-de Dome, and the suburbs of Lyons. Paulucci was interested in the different forms of what has been called 'pathological emigration': the exploitation abroad, by foreign employers, and parasitical intermediaries, of the poorer class of emigrants. The classical type of this white-slave traffic is that of girls exported for prostitution. Paulucci published articles, subsequently collected in a book, in which he followed the migrations of organ-grinders, *pifferari*, glass-workers, unwilling prostitutes and those little boys from Lucca who modelled and sold statuettes in terracotta.

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These last were called *figurinai*, or *stucchinai*. They might be seen in the streets of Paris and other big towns, sometimes after midnight, trying to dispose of statuettes representing Garibaldi, various saints, and the crowned heads, past and present, of Europe. If they had not affected a sale, they would hardly dare to go home. The people who took pity on them more often were the women of the streets, whose hearts were touched by the sight of children, trying to earn a living on the same 'beat' as themselves.

The dealers in terracotta statuettes were dispersed over the West, but the little Italian and Spanish carriers and gatherers in the glass factories were to be found in the valleys of the Haute Loire and of the Seine. Inspired by Paulucci's teaching and example, I took an active interest in them, though I do not claim to have done more than round off some of the work that others had begun.

In a conversation I had with Paulucci, he pointed out the scant effect produced by official protests made through our Ambassador in Paris, Count Tornielli. Diplomacy has limited powers to combat vested interests. But a report of Lionello Scelsi, Vice Consul at Lyons, was given a publicity rarely accorded to official documents of a non-political character. After which a moral and humanitarian crusade was launched, both in Italy and in France. Paulucci's articles in the *Revues des Revues* were followed by editorials in *Le Matin*. An Association was formed in Turin, and two missions of enquiry visited the *verreries* and denounced the evils they discovered. Both the Italian Parliament and the French authorities were roused. At the same time, a Neapolitan lawyer, Ugo Cafiero, toured the regions of Campania and Terra di Lavoro, where the child-emigrants were recruited. Other leaders in the campaign were Professor Schiaparelli, the Egyptologist; Marchese Sommi Picenardi, and Tomaso Gallarati Scotti (the same who, in 1947, was appointed Italian Ambassador in London).

* * *

Technological progress has put an end to most of the processes of manipulation, which were once necessary to produce an ordinary glass bottle. Pressing is now carried out by a so-called 'plunger', and the human breath has been replaced by compressed air. But when I was young, boys much younger than myself were so necessary

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to the glass industry that in some of the French *verreries* a skilled 'blower' could not get a job unless he brought one or two boy-helpers to assist him. These were known as *gamins*, *porteurs* and *grand-garçon chauffeurs*.

The *gamin* had to gather a blob of molten glass from the furnace-mouth by means of a blow-pipe, then roll it on a slab of stone and slightly expand it with his breath, before handing the tubular iron to the professional blower, or *ouvrier*. The *porteur* had to catch the tube on which the half-finished bottle was impaled and which the *ouvrier* threw to him from a distance of about six feet, and he had to run off with it to the cooling room near by, and return *prestissimo*, to await another. Woe to him if he let a bottle fall! The *ouvrier* was paid by the piece. Speed interested him more than the well-being of his subordinates.

In the vicinity of the tank-furnaces, the heat might read 40 degrees centigrade in winter, and 60 in summer. The mere strain of running in and out of rooms with different temperatures was ruinous to the health of undernourished boys. The coal-dust suspended in the air, and the gases discharged from the amalgam, helped to develop tuberculosis. The passing of the blow-pipe from mouth to mouth also facilitated the contagion of syphilis.

Work continued day and night, in eight-hour shifts, the first beginning at four a.m. till midday; the second ending at eight o'clock in the evening; the third ran from eight p.m. till four a.m. No *ouvrier* ever worked overtime. But the supply of boys being insufficient, it was a normal practice of the *verreries* to oblige them to work in two shifts running. Such a *doublage* was prohibited by law, but the legal restrictions were difficult to enforce, and a fine of five francs hardly acted as a deterrent.

The legal age at which a French boy could be employed was thirteen. Even at that age, very few French parents would subject their children to such a strain. *Gamins* and *porteurs* had to be recruited abroad. They came mostly from the two Italian provinces of Caserta and Campobasso. The demand for children was so urgent that the parents of several were sometimes offered a job at the same time, a sinecure bringing in 60 francs a month, whereas the children were paid from 60 to 100 francs. They themselves, however, only

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received a few centimes on a Sunday, the rest was kept by those who had procured them and who were supposed to feed, house, and look after them. Education was not an item of expenditure, for the boys were left without instruction of any kind.

Medical attendance was almost non-existent, for both employers and *incettatori* feared to reveal the unhealthy conditions in which the boys worked, and the dangerous nature of their tasks. A boy with a hideous burn from molten glass falling on his foot had it washed with petroleum, and that's all. Burns were frequent, for the boys ran about in clumsy wooden clogs that left the instep exposed.

Boys who went to France in the care of a parent were not ill-treated, apart from being overworked. But the father of a couple of *gamins* would be encouraged to palm off other children as his own, and thus he became party to a fraud. The privileged ones would be employed in the vicinity of Paris, on less fatiguing work than bottle-making. But the boys who emigrated in charge of an *incettatore* were literally sold into slavery. Yet often it was the children themselves who begged their parents to let them go abroad. They were dazzled by the prospect of travel, and by specious promises of high pay, easy work, good food and fine clothes, in a rich country.

They left Italy, to enter France, as often as not with identification papers that were fraudulently altered in the essentials of age, parentage and even surname. Passports were based on the information contained in birth certificates, delivered by Italian communes, and the *incettatori* were always provided with the birth-certificates of other, older boys. These would be used to palm off a wretched child of ten years old, as a boy of fifteen, or more.

'*Qu'ils sont petits, ces italiens!*' was the ironical comment of the French employers, who were perfectly aware of the swindle.

To their honour be it said that the French authorities were not indifferent, but the Labour Inspectors had the greatest difficulty in their efforts to put it down. At Rive-de-Giers, in the Richarmes factory, they once found no boys employed at all. A system of vedettes, always on the look-out, permitted the employer to hide the little slaves in a disused furnace while the inspectors were on the premises. A few weeks later, a surprise visit by Italian enquirers (who at first were not recognized as such) discovered the presence

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of numerous groups of *gamins* and *porteurs* at work before the furnaces.[1]

The local inspectors could not question Italian children who knew no French, and the children themselves were afraid of telling the truth, well knowing what punishments awaited them, if they complained.

After a few days at the furnace-mouth, the boys' eyes would become bloodshot, their mouths and nostrils blackened by gaseous emanations from the blow-tubes, their thin bodies scarred with blows and burns. They were fed mostly on black bread, and put to sleep four in a bed, with straw mattresses, in conditions of indescribable filth and misery.

Let me give the name of a victim, one only: Filippo Varallo, whose sufferings were denounced to the police by horrified neighbours, and the police pointed him out to the Italians who came to investigate. The boy could not have been more than eleven years old, but was listed as being seventeen. He was woken up out of a kind of stupor, but could not answer intelligibly, which was not surprising as he had been at work for sixteen hours at a stretch. He did not know his own name. His huge eyes had in them no sparkle of life. There was a woman with him, who claimed to be his aunt, and she succeeded in preventing his being given up to his would-be rescuers. He cannot have lived much longer, where he was found, at the Bâtiment des Combles.

I mentioned the *Verrerie* of Monsieur Richarmes (this name figures in many official reports and in an article by G. Sommi Picenardi in the *Nuova Antologia* on 1st February 1902). It was situated at Rive-de-Giers, where, in a street aptly called La Rue Noire, ten Italian

[1] The following is an extract from the *Journal Officiel*, No. 282, of the 17th October 1901:

". . . C'est surtout dans les verreries que sont constatées les infractions les plus graves et les plus nombreuses. Des jeunes garçons, des petites filles même, y sont occupés dès l'age de dix ans, et c'est par la déclaration des accidents dont ces malheureux enfants ont été victimes q'un certain nombre de contraventions ont été connues du service. En ce cas, l'age des victimes est majoré, et ce n'est qu'après une enquête minutieuse que l'inspecteur finit par connaitre la verité. On ne saurait réprimer trop énergiquement de tels abus.

"Les maîtres verriers se retranchent derrière la difficulté de recrutement de leur personnel enfantin; d'autre part, la complicité des parents est parfois revoltante.

"Ce genre d'infraction est d'ailleurs très difficile à surprendre, les usines ayant plusieurs issues favorisant la fuite des enfants. Ainsi faut-il quelque-fois déléguer deux ou trois inspecteurs pour faire œuvre utile."

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children lived in a stall, where once there had been a stable, and where a disused staircase served as a latrine, so that the stench, as you approached, almost knocked you down.

It is an old trick among the traffickers in human flesh, to camouflage their activities under a cloak of charity. This kind of swindle figures even in literature. It furnished Henry Seton Merriman with the subject for a novel, *Roden's Corner*, and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch describes, in *True Tilda*, a clerical *incettatore*: the Rev. Dr. Purdie Glasson, Principal of the Holy Innocents Orphanage, of Bursfield, near Birmingham.

Benedetto Carlesimo, member of a family of *incettatori* that ended by being expelled from France, had the bright idea of printing a little pamphlet, purporting to be the statutes and prospectus of a charitable institution presided over by himself. There followed a list of the benevolent persons who gave the institution their backing. The crowning touch (both in the literal and figurative sense) was the claim that the institution enjoyed the patronage of the Queen of Italy.

With such inducements, what wonder that the people in remote towns and villages, made gullible by their bitter poverty, were persuaded to confide their children to a charitable individual, who even offered to give them a hundred lire a year, per child, for themselves.

The end would come, after a year or less, when the little *porteur* or *gamin* became too ill to work any more. Then his owner would take him to the Italian Consul General in Lyons, or in Paris, to be repatriated. And here again, the *incettatore* would pose as a charitable individual, who had discovered the boy's condition by mere chance, and had befriended him, after finding him wandering about the streets. Nor would the child itself dare to contradict this statement, even if he were in a condition to understand what it was all about.

A social evil, such as the white-slave traffic in its various forms, cannot be eradicated in a few weeks or months. It is apt to reappear wherever poverty, *mala suada fames*, makes trustful people easy to victimize. In 1902, the *incettatori*, balked in Italy, began to seek new sources of profit elsewhere. I learned from Monsieur Lépine, Prefect of Police in Paris, and from Monsieur Paturet, a Magistrate in Lyons, that when we had delivered the small Italian boys from the clutches

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of their inhuman employers, other batches of sallow, dark-eyed little boys began to arrive, not from beyond the Alps, but from beyond the Pyrenees.

An Italian boy, whose parents had begged for his return, was traced to Choisy-le-Roi, but disappeared before he could be rescued. His particular slave-owner took him to England, with the idea of finding employment for him in a glass-factory near Birmingham.

I had seen how much practical good had been done by Paulucci's writings in French, and I imagined that it might be of some use to draw the attention of the public, in English, to a humanitarian cause. But numerous rejection slips from the editors of important reviews showed that the matter had scant interest for them. So I took up my pen again and wrote 'The Valley of the Bees', as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In due course, it appeared in the pages of *Temple Bar*: a typical nineteenth-century magazine-story of the mawkish, sentimental kind. By turning myself into an eccentric but philanthropic Roman Prince, in love with a pretty American, I managed to bring in the facts about the glass-factories, and some of my own modest activities.

Another foreigner, writing in English, has written on the same subject, though I did not realize this till a few years ago, when my daughter, Diana, gave me a book that she had picked up in Biarritz. It is called *Memories and Vagaries*, by Axel Munthe. I had never heard of their being published, but some of those *Memories* were already known to me. Munthe himself had told me of them.

Let me re-tell a small incident described in Doctor Munthe's pages about Sœur Philomène, one of the Sisters of St. Augustine, serving in a big Paris hospital.

One evening, a boy who had been found lying unconscious in the street was brought in from the police-station. He was bleeding from an ugly wound in his head, and was stiff with cold. Only some thin, ragged clothes protected him against the winter's night. When Sister Philomène put him to bed, he remained unconscious for some time, and then began to moan. Soon he opened his large, wondering eyes. And his hands groped about, in search of something. He became quieter, after he had got hold of the tiny fiddle, which had been found with him and which constituted his whole outfit.

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He could not be got to speak, and the French Doctor was about to write upon the slate over his bed: *Commotion cérébrale; perte de parole.* But a characteristic southern gesture gave Axel Munthe a clue to the boy's nationality. And he asked him: '*Tu sei italiano?*'

'*Sissignore. Vengo da Napoli.*'

The little emigrant had found a friend, but too late . . . The winter's night had been too cold for him. As the day wore on, he began to cough. During three nights, Sister Philomène watched over him, and on the fourth he died. I give the end of the story in Axel Munthe's own words:

No one had taken any notice of him before; he belonged to nobody as long as he was alive, but once dead, he belonged, according to hospital rules, to the dissecting room. He had hardly grown cold before they came to carry him down to the Anatomical Hall, where his frail little body was soon to be cut to pieces by the dissecting knives of the students. Sœur Philomène and the doctor were standing by his bed, and their eyes met. He who had been unable to save the life of his little friend, now covered his face with the sheet, and beckoned silently to the porter to delay his errand; and he went down to see *Monsieur le Directeur.* . . .

In the evening a small coffin was carried out of the hospital gates; the funeral procession was not a long one, only a Sister of Charity and a student. The homeless little vagabond lay there in peace, with his broken fiddle in his hand. And of all the wealth of flowers which the luxury of the winter metropolis borrows each morning from the summer of the South, a handful of violets had found its way into the coffin of the curly-headed little musician, with a fragrant greeting from the land of his birth, where his mother that same evening, in the little church high up on the mountains, implored the Madonna to watch over her child wandering about alone over the world.

The problem of Italian child-emigrants, though not as it existed in my youth, has now re-emerged among the greater problems, left over by two world wars. And these problems are both national and international. A new and vaster community of *Les Misérables* has arisen among the ruins of a world that has passed away. You might seek among those ruins for the ideals that I pursued when I was young.

If I have done nothing much in my life to be proud of, at least it has happened to me, once or twice, to find, far from home, a little boy in tears, and to have left him smiling.

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LINA CAVALIERI

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Giovanni Colonna di Cesarò

ONE morning, during carnival in 1898, I received a message, asking if —as I played the violin—I would join a party of young bloods, who were proposing to serenade the Fahrensbach girl. I did not know the lady, but I accepted with enthusiasm. At the age of eighteen, the prospect of playing the violin in the street, on a cold winter's night, was more attractive than it would be now.

We met by appointment at No. 75 Via Nazionale, where Giovanni Colonna lived with his mother, née Sonnino (a sister of Baron Sidney Sonnino, who represented Italy, together with Orlando, at the Peace Conference in Paris, after the first world war).

Giovanni's name, as given in the *Almanach de Gotha*, was :

Giovanni Antonio Francesco Giorgio Landolfo Colonna, 8th Duke of Cesarò, Duke of Reitano, Marquess of Fiumedinisi, Count of Sant' Alesio, Baron of Joppolo, etc. etc.

He was the head of the Sicilian branch of the Colonna family, descended from Federigo Colonna, called ' the Roman ', who established himself in Sicily in the year 1223.

The friendship between Giovanni and myself began when our hearts were full of the lighter melodies, which may explain why we should have serenaded the Fahrensbach girl. As a matter of fact we never did so, for we played and sang on the wrong side of the house. The only person to benefit was the cook. Giovanni was not musical, but he contributed to the concert, playing a rustic instrument known as a *pu-ti-pù* : an earthenware jar with the top covered with sheepskin, drawn tight as a drum. Through the skin was stuck a reed, which you rubbed up and down with your hand, producing a sound like a grunt. It was a low-toned instrument, like a double-bass, suitable for accompaniments.

No lily-white hand appeared between half-opened shutters, to throw down a red rose. After a few tunes that elicited no response, we moved off. Just then, a sudden fluttering and squawking in the air preceded the arrival from above of a large gallinaceous fowl, who with many turkey-cock ejaculations, settled at our feet and allowed himself to be caught. From the direction of his downward flight, we

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decided that he must have come from the house opposite the Fahrensbach residence. Possibly he had escaped from a cage, or pen, on the top of a flat roof. We woke up the house-porter and offered to return the turkey to its rightful owner. But the porter knew nothing about it and was indignant at being disturbed in the middle of his beauty-sleep. The turkey came home with me, and some days later we ate him, before going to a masked ball (or *veglione*) at the Costanzi opera-house.

During that entertainment, I came in touch, for the first time in my life, with Far Eastern diplomacy. This was when, in the lightness of my heart, I pulled the pigtail of a Chinese Mandarin, feeling sure that it would come off. But it didn't. The wearer was not, as I had imagined, a masked reveller, but a foreign diplomat : no other than the Minister in Rome of the Son of Heaven, Kuang-hsu, Emperor of China !

Having discovered that we were kindred spirits, Giovanni and I were always on the look-out for some new means to get rid of our superfluous energy. Among other things, we organized paper-chases on bicycles, on summer nights, in the older part of the town, through narrow lanes that bear the names of medieval and papal Rome (the Street of the Golden Mask, the Court of the Bloody Tower).

' Hounds met ' in front of Latour's Café, where the Colonna Palace has an outer tower, at the corner of the Via Nazionale. There were not many social doings in Rome, during summer months in motorless days. *Faute de mieux*, smart ladies and their daughters used to congregate at midnight, round the little tables outside Latour's, and partake of ices, while they watched us move off. And it happened that they would sometimes rub elbows with ' ladies ' who were not listed in the Social Register of Rome (the so-called *Carnet Mondain*). On one occasion a Member of the Hunt turned up in an open cab, or *botticella*, with two girls (described as *chanteuses*) and their maid, in white apron and cap. The maid was seated on the box, next to the cabman. I abstain from giving the name of the young man who was responsible for this turn-out, for he now considers himself a respectable member of society. Mutual friends may identify him when I add that some weeks later he went off with a lady who sold neck-ties in the Via Condotti, and travelled all over Sicily with her. They passed

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themselves off as Delegates to an Agricultural Congress, then meeting at Palermo.

Our nocturnal paper-chases used to finish up with a fish-supper at Bucci's in the Pescheria. These were the rowdiest meals that I have ever attended. Only one of our party behaved with any pretence at decorum, and this was the Baron Kuhn von Kuhenfeld, Councillor of the Austrian Embassy: an elderly man with a bald head and a short, pointed beard. Why he should have elected to join company with us I do not know. He cannot possibly have enjoyed it, for he had a rather formal manner and was inclined to stand on his dignity. This is not easy when someone (to be precise, the Marchese Ugo Spinola) has overturned a soup-tureen full of whipped cream (meant to be served with the strawberries) over your head, and someone else has completed the arrangement by pouring the contents of a coffee-pot on top of the cream-covered cranium.

I only caught a glimpse of Baron Kuhn after he had been tarred and feathered (so to speak), for the next moment I retired under the table. Not that I was drunk. But I thought it only prudent to suffer a momentary eclipse, for a row had broken out that was really alarming. The trouble arose when the youngest of the de Martinos put his eye to the keyhole of a door, leading into an adjacent *cabinet-particulier*, and his elder brother gave him a terrific push from behind that sent him hurtling through the door on top of the amorous couple in the next room. During the ensuing pandemonium, nearly all the members of the supper-party sought refuge under the long table. This group of revellers included the scions of the oldest Roman families, answering to the historic names of Colonna, Orsini, Caetani, Odescalchi, Chigi, and so on. . . . None of us, on that occasion, showed any courage whatever. To quote Euripides: "Cowards do not count in battle. They are there, but not in it!"

The only one who maintained a bold front, and faced the irate gentleman from the *cabinet-particulier*, was Baron Kuhn. And I really think that his appearance, with his bald head crowned with whipped cream, and his beard dripping coffee, had the effect of sobering the claimant for our blood. The latter must have thought, not unnaturally, that he had broken in upon a supper of criminal lunatics, or that he was 'seeing things'.

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One autumn, I went to stay with Giovanni at Joppolo, which was one of the original Colonna estates in Sicily. This was during an election, when danger to life and limb was greater on that island of an ancient civilization than in darkest Africa. I remember riding from Joppolo to Raffadali, on the other side of the valley. We were mounted on mules, and rode through vast corn-fields that lay fallow under the autumn rain. Though quite a large party, we proceeded in single file, with a space of some twenty yards between each rider. In this formation, if he had been held up when crossing the stream at the bottom of the gully, only one of the party could have been stopped. The others could have closed in to help their companion.

Giovanni's character made him singularly adapted to combative, militant politics. Absolutely without self-consciousness and affectation ; pleasant to deal with and interesting to talk to, he was yet the most litigious man I ever knew. He paid his lawyers by the year, and was never happy unless he had at least five lawsuits going at the same time. Once, I believe, he had seventeen of them, and like Montmorency, the fox-terrier in *Three Men in a Boat*, thought he had got to Heaven !

There is a story about him that dates from the days when he first entered parliament. In the heat of an animated discussion, Giovanni threw an ink-pot at the government bench. He aimed at Signor Schanzer, but missed him. Some of the ink went over the *rédingote* of the Prime Minister, Signor Giolitti. When the latter got home that night, his wife asked how it was that he had got covered with ink. The Prime Minister answered mildly : 'It is a sign of ducal displeasure.'

This happened in the year 1909. Since then all inkpots in the Italian Houses of Parliament have been firmly screwed to the desks.

The Sunny Side of the Street

> Every street has two sides, the shady side and the sunny. When two men shake hands and part, mark which of the two takes the sunny side ; he will be the younger man of the two.
>
> BULWER-LYTTON.

Besides rescuing little Italian boys from the *verreries* in France, the heroin 'The Valley of the Bees', worked incognito as a mill-hand in

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Paterson, New Jersey, and later as an overseer on the railway-line over the Albula Pass, in Switzerland. Paterson, N.J. came into the story because the anarchist, Bresci, who assassinated King Humbert I at Monza, in 1900, came back to Italy from the States, to commit that premeditated crime. I took the opportunity of pointing out, in my story, how dangerous was the policy which left Italian emigrants without sufficient aid and protection. Poverty-stricken aliens, they offered a fertile field for nihilist propaganda.

The Albula Pass opens out, on the Engadine side, in the Beversthal, which in the Romanch dialect means Valley of the Bees. This valley is not far from St. Moritz, where I used to go for winter sports, and only a little more distant from Campfer, where Mother and I often stayed in the summer.

I cannot claim, like the prince in my story, to have shared the emigrants' hardships as one of themselves.[1] I lived the life of my own class, and being neither ill-favoured, nor poor, nor adverse to pleasurable adventure, I brought a natural gaiety into the social whirl of my time. But though preferring the sunny side of the street, I was no hedonist, to make the pursuit of pleasure the principal aim of existence. When in the Engadine, winter or summer, I passed much of my time in the Beversthal among my nationals who were engaged in boring the long tunnel through the mountain. Their task was harder, owing to lack of many hygienic precautions, than that of the workers on the Simplon tunnel. The absence of parallel bores made the high temperatures (due to hot springs) difficult to bear, and there were no shower-baths and *vestiaires* for the men as they came out into the open air, which, in winter, was bitterly cold.

The priest who lived among the workmen, at the mouth of the tunnel, was a friend of mine, as were many of his colleagues of the *Opera Bonomelli* that looked after the spiritual welfare of Italian emigrants. Sometimes, when I was in the Beversthal, a storm would blow up, making it difficult to get home again. Once I passed a night in a hay-loft, and another time as a guest of Doctor Bernard,

[1] If you seek a modern counterpart to St. Peter Claver's mission to the slave-ships, you will find it in the work of a little Italian nun, who has recently been canonized as a saint, Madre Saveria Cabrini. She is known in Italy as *la santa degli emigranti*. Hospitals, Orphanages, Schools and rest-houses bear her name all over North and South America, as in Europe.

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at Samaden (he had a small collection of pictures by Segantini, that were a joy for ever).

One winter's night, when staying at the Kulm Hotel at St. Moritz Dorf, I had just changed into a dinner jacket, to descend to the restaurant, when they brought me a message from the priest at the Beversthal, to say that one of the workmen was in danger. He was known to have started to walk over the Bernina Pass, on his way to Italy, and to have been caught in a snowstorm.

It took me little more than an hour to organize a rescue-party. We left the hotel in sleighs, to the sound of revelry by night. In the ballroom, old Doctor Holland was directing some form of cotillion that must have dated from the days of Beau Nash at Bath. For the first hundred yards of our drive, the strains of music mingled with the jingling of sleigh-bells and the crunching of the snow under our runners. Violins were playing *Wiener Blut*, and the frosty air, sprinkled with stars, seemed to act like a sounding-board. I felt like the hero in Longfellow's *Excelsior* :

> The shades of night were falling fast,
> As through an Alpine village passed
> A youth, who bore 'mid snow and ice,
> A banner with a strange device
> Excelsior !

Two weeks later, the hall porter of the hotel handed me a letter from Italy, with a golden crown engraved on the envelope above the legend : *Casa di Sua Maestà la Regina.* The priest in the Beversthal had written to the Bishop Bonomelli, at Cremona, and the latter, who was on friendly terms with Queen Margherita, had passed on to her the information about the episode on the Bernina Pass. The Queen sent some money for the man I had rescued. Ferdinand Guiccioli, who wrote to me by the Queen's orders, added his own congratulations. The story, passing from one person to another, had grown beyond recognition. I appeared as having done something heroic.

As a matter of fact, we found the man and brought him back to the little hospital at St. Moritz, where he died a few days later, from mortification following severe frost-bite in the hands and feet. The fore-finger on my own hand got frost-bitten and still bears the mark, in the deformation of the nail that replaced the one I lost. But I took

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no pride in my prowess. Indeed, I remained with a painful impression that I was partly responsible for the man's death. Having brought him down to safety, I took him, at the first opportunity, into a warm room. This should have been avoided. I learnt too late that the rapid re-establishment of circulation, through the sudden thawing of the blood-vessels, can be a cause of inflammation and gangrene.

I have forgotten the date of this episode, but it must have been in the winter of 1904–05, for I remember coming home, out of the star-filled winter's night, and stopping in the hotel lounge to read the latest telegrams about the Russo-Japanese war.

* * *

I shared with Giovanni Colonna, a youthful, but ambitious, scheme, to take peasants from his property in Sicily, or from my native Venetia, and to establish them in our remaining colony of Erithrea. I say 'remaining', for when I was a boy, that is to say from the year 1889 till 1896, all Ethiopia had been an Italian protectorate. We lost our hold on that region, just as the British lost their hold on the Sudan in Gordon's time, after an unsuccessful colonial war.

Giovanni and I obtained official encouragement from the Commendatore Agnesa, who directed our 'Colonial Office', which then consisted of a few rooms on the ground floor of the Consulta. He promised to grant us a 'concession', if we found the conditions in Erithrea suitable to our enterprise. But the project came to nothing. Conditions on or beyond the plateau of Asmara offered little security for the peasants, or profit for us. The Abyssinian tribes were still inclined to be aggressive, and made occasional raids on our territory, as on the British-controlled territories on their Western and Southern borders. We came to the conclusion that Italian emigration had better be directed to the U.S.A., which in those days did not discriminate against our peasants, in favour of the nordic races. 'Quotas' had not yet been devised to exclude us.

Like Pompey, in the days of ancient Rome, I first made the acquaintance of African soil by falling on it ('*Teneo te, Africa!*'). I was ignominiously shot off on the ground, when attempting to mount a camel, a pessimistic animal who bore the name of Socrates, possibly because he wore habitually an expression like that of a philosopher fallen on evil days.

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When Socrates lay down and allowed me to get on his back, I had no idea which end of him would rise up first. When a horse gets up, he rises on his fore-legs, a cow on her hinds legs. But camels, being contrary by nature, do either one or the other according to what they think will most inconvenience the rider.

The camel suffers from all the diseases that afflict man, and all those that afflict the lower animals, besides a few that he cultivates on his own account. Even at the best of times he is so much in the habit of looking at the dark side of things, that it is not easy to know when he *is* ill. I felt that Socrates's idea of a practical joke would be to stop with me a thousand miles from anywhere, and lie down and die. This he would do with a sarcastic smile, as if to say : 'Here is where *I* get off!'

When travelling in the interior, Giovanni and I slept in *tukuls*, circular tents with a thatched roof. The roof is much more solid than the hut, and it was a common sight to see the natives taking the roof of an old hut, to put it on a new one. The sides of a *tukul* are often little more than a few branches of poles roughly put together, and the wind hums through them like a Jews' harp. My native servant would empty the washing-basin by throwing the water against the side of the hut. Some of it went though, and this he considered enough for practical purposes. Between the roof and the circular chamber below was a sheet of sail-cloth, much frequented by mice. The snakes in the vicinity would come, at night, and hunt the mice. Every now and then, a mouse would fall with a plop into the water-basin, and when I woke up in the small hours of the morning, I would generally see a couple of snakes' tails, hanging down at the side of the sail-cloth ceiling.

On cold nights—so I was told—the snakes might try to come to bed with you, and curl up on your chest, to keep themselves warm. I don't know whether this was true, but it seemed to me that they would be preferable, as bed-fellows, to the local *hetairae*, with hair redolent of rancid butter.

What Abyssinians call 'good water' for drinking would not be considered that anywhere else, and a draught from a wayside well under a sycamore tree cost me many a day's illness. To fall ill in a *tukul* twenty-five days' journey from the coast of the Red Sea, is not

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a pleasant experience. Only time and nature can cure you. I realized in those days how big was the world, and how small I was in proportion. I was not sorry to embark once more at Massawah.

When I got home, I found a pile of letters and bills on my writing desk, and on top of them an invitation : *L'Ambassadeur de France et Madame Barrère ont l'honneur* . . . That same night, there was a dinner and a musical evening at the French Embassy. I telephoned to know if there were still a place for me at the bottom of the table, and was told, 'Yes !' Barrère (with whom I occasionally made music) added a message. He said that Debussy's quartet was going to be played for the first time in Rome.

After the lonely spaces, the thorny scrub, and the pitiless sun burning down on dried-up watercourses—the stately rooms and rich Gobelins of the Palazzo Farnese . . . jewelled fingers and women's eyes, sparkling in the candlelight. After the yapping of jackals in the rubbish heaps on the outskirts of an African village—the sweep of stringed instruments weaving the air with scents and visions. After the roasted kid and fermented honey, in the hut of some half savage *ras*—the white table heaped with roses, and set with silver and crystal. Bare necks bending ; bubbles in the wine . . . After weird stories of tribal wars, and brigandage, and snake-bites—the social gossip, and the verbal fencing, with the buttons on the foils.

Young Men's Visions

. . . your young men shall see visions.

Book of the Prophet Joel, ii. 28.

I DID not feel divinely called to any particular profession. So many paths opened out before me, at a time

When all the world was young, lad,
And all the trees were green,
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a Queen !

I first got it into my head that I might become a real musician, and went to Berlin, to study with that end in view. But I was advised—and rightly advised—to seek some other means of expressing my personality.

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Then I took, twice in succession, the examination for the diplomatic service, and failed both times. That is to say, I failed to come out on top. The test being a competitive one, and I half way down the list, none of the vacant posts were assigned to me. I can't say that I was much disappointed. At that time, a diplomatic career did not represent an ideal in itself, but merely a means to an end. Like most young men, who have, or think they have, the world at their feet, I had dreams that hung before me like a beckoning star. In the vision of the part that I might play, my role was a double one : to further the expansion of Italy overseas ; to promote better relations with Great Britain, and inaugurate a common policy of penetration in Africa.

The reader will smile, no doubt, at such presumption. Also, he may point out (with the wisdom that the history has taught us) that these ideals might be incompatible, one with the other.

Be this as it may, I should begin by explaining how a young man, whose outlook on life was gay and light-hearted, could aim so high.

First of all there was the conscious heredity of a family tradition. I don't mean far-off memories of ancestors in armour, but the inspiring tradition of recent generations. A Varè was one of Napoleon's generals. My father, Giambattista Varè, born in Venice in 1817, shared in the youthful strivings after the ideal of Italian unity, liberty and independence.

In an older generation than mine, the names of certain Italian patriots were household words. But few indeed of our younger contemporaries today know about the romantic nineteenth-century movement that was called the ' Risorgimento '. And I wonder how many New Yorkers, when they pass along the asphalt paths in Central Park West, have any idea who that Giuseppe Mazzini could have been, whose bust looks out across the green sward, in the direction of Fifth Avenue. His was the inspiration that went before the Italians in their exodus from servitude, like a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

I have inherited many relics of Mazzini's, the letters he wrote to my father, and the pocket-book (his own pocket-book) that he gave him, when they parted in exile, after meeting at Lausanne. This was during the period of disillusion which followed the unsuccessful

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revolutions of 1848–49. A similarity of circumstances brought the two men together as refugees on Swiss territory. Mazzini, with the help of Garibaldi, had set up a republic in Rome (while the Pope fled to Gaeta). At the same time, Daniele Manin and my father proclaimed a sister republic in Venice. The French sent an army, to restore Pope Pius IX to his dominions. The Austrians, after a prolonged siege, reconquered Venice.

Friendships between Italian revolutionists were often made—as my father's friendship with Mazzini—in disappointment and disaster. But these men were destined to feel the bitter-sweet torment that accompanies the harvesting of a dream. Thanks to them, a new Italy emerged, united and independent. They were ardent nationalists, and their nationalism was the expression of collective liberty.

Of the group that centred round Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour, there is an appreciation in the first pages of Benedetto Croce's *A History of Italy 1871–1915* (translated from the Italian by Cecilia M. Ady) :

> They are worthy of being held up as examples for the purity of their love of country, which was nothing else but love of virtue ; for the sobriety and dignity of their lives ; for their entire disinterestedness ; for their powers of heart and mind, and for the religious self-discipline to which they had accustomed themselves in youth . . .
>
> Their deeds, and the words that they committed to writing, are a permanent source of moral and political education, warning us, exhorting us, and at times causing us to blush.

It is a fine idea that, in the true patriot, love of country is nothing but love of virtue. Goethe once said much the same thing to Eckermann, when he compared such a man to an eagle, looking down from dizzy heights over the countryside, to discover what he may seize. It is all the same to the eagle, if what he seeks be in Saxony or in Prussia. He knows nothing of state territories.[1]

This is perhaps why the patriots who founded a united Italy were

[1] See the *Gespräche mit Goethe*, by Johann Peter Eckermann.
Der Dichter wird als Mensch und Bürger sein Vaterland lieben, aber das Vaterland seiner poetischen Kräfter und seines poetischen Wirkens ist das Gute, Edle and Schöne, das an keine besonderen Provinz und an kein besonderes Land gebunden ist, und das er ergreift und bildet wo er es findet. Er ist darin dem Adler gleich, der mit freien Blick über Ländern schwebt, und dem es gleich ist, ob der Hase, auf den er herabscheist, in Preussen oder in Sachsen läuft.

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admired and loved in many countries beside their own. Their virtue transcends all frontiers.

That period of history had closed ten years before I was born. New ideals had succeeded those of unity and independence. For these, so I decided, I would work in my turn, trying to emulate my father in his disinterestedness and in his honesty of purpose, if not in the greater qualities that I did not possess.

When I sit at his desk (as I am seated now), in his high-backed chair, the same clock ticks out the minutes for me, as it did for him. His portrait looks down on me from above the mantelpiece. Sometimes I half expect his ghost to come out of the shadows and speak to me.

Why not? The spiritual continuity of the race is an eternal dialogue between the quick and the dead.

* * *

There is always unhappiness in the world, and it takes different forms with the passing generations. In every generation, there are young men who have visions of going to the help of those who suffer. Sometimes there is a poet, who interprets the voice of the sufferers.

In the nineteenth century, the social injustice that was at the bottom of class-wars found expression in Elisabeth Barrett Browning's *The Cry of the Children*, and in Thomas Hood's *The Song of the Shirt*.

I made several unsuccessful attempts to write a poem, in which to voice the cry of the Italian peasant, forced to emigrate to foreign lands. Their unhappiness was that which Dante—speaking of his own exile—expresses in the Seventeenth Canto of the *Paradiso*:

E proverai si come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com'è duro calle
Lo scendere, e'l salir per l'altrui scale.

(And thou shalt prove how salt a flavour hath
The bread of others, and how hard the path
To climb and to descend the stranger's stairs.)

It has been calculated that more than fourteen million Italian emigrants left their country during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, before the outbreak of the first world-war. This is more than the total population of many European states. Such an exodus should have been looked upon as a

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world problem (connected with unemployment), fit subject for an International Conference. It represented the kind of problem that, in President Wilson's imaginings, the League of Nations was created to solve. Instead of which it was left to chance and to the interference of selfishly interested parties. If the Italy I lived in, in my youth, might be described as being ' without tears ', this could not be said of the Italians who were forced to seek work abroad.

It was in 1926 that I came, by chance, upon an ' emigrant's prayer ', written in prose by Carlo Delcroix, one of our *grands mutilés de guerre* (he was blinded and maimed of both hands, in the first world-war). It consists of two short paragraphs, meant to interpret the feelings of the humbler Italian expatriate, ' in tears amid the alien corn '.

He invokes his native land :

O mother, bless your distant sons, those that left you poor and alone, to offer you from afar the bitter adventure of their lives. Bless the children who learnt to pray in the harmony of your words ; the young men who toil, dreaming of a love that awaits them beyond the far horizon ; the old folk who, on the threshold of death, long to rest in the bosom of their mother-soil, and implore the lament of their native bells, in a last good-bye !

Italy, bless your offspring, those who love you from a distance, those who dream of you without knowing you, those who call upon your name, but cannot see you. Bless them in sweat and tears, in travail, in love, in pain. Bless your children, who have abandoned you only to love you more, in the double exile from the homeland and the heart's desire !

Dr. Axel Munthe

THE physician who attended my father in his last illness was Doctor Ehrhardt. When I knew him, he had an apartment in the Via San Nicolò de Tolentino. Before that, so I have heard, he lived in the Piazza di Spagna, opposite the house which is now the Keats Memorial, and which was then occupied by Dr. Axel Munthe.

After my father's death, Dr. Ehrhardt, perceiving in his widow some premonitions of melancholia, advised her to consult Munthe. That is how she first got to know him.

In his *Story of San Michele*, Munthe writes that Ehrhardt was :

. . . one of the best doctors and one of the kindest-hearted men I ever met . . . Although over seventy, he was still in possession of his mental

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and physical vigour, day and night on the go, always ready to help, rich and poor all the same to him. He was the most perfect type of the family doctor of bygone times, now almost extinct—so much the worse for suffering humanity. It was impossible not to love him. . . . He was a German by birth, and had there been many like him in the Fatherland in 1914, there would never have been a war.

Ehrhardt died when I was in my teens, but we continued to see Munthe after he introduced Mother and myself to a friend and patient of his, a Mrs. Stephens, who had a suite in the Grand Hotel, close to where we lived, in the Via Venti Settembre.

Mrs. Stephens was consumptive, and when I first met her, it did not seem that she had much longer to live. But Munthe said that, if she did not die within the next two years, she might attain the age of eighty. And this is what she did.

Her Christian name was Ella, and her husband's was Edward. They were rich people and had no children. I imagined that their money might come from Stephen's Ink, but it was not so. Their fortune had been put together by previous generations—so I was told—when the lighting of ships in the British Navy, as in the Admiralty offices, had all been done by candles. The purveyors of these candles had made their pile long before Edward's day. He was a pleasant little man, who did not seem to have much to do, except pay his wife's bills and look after a family of poodles : feeding them, clipping them and taking them for walks in Kensington Gardens.

At Munthe's suggestion, Ella Stephens and my mother passed a winter at Capri, which island had more of Paradise and less of Cosmopolis than it has now. There, they made friends with the various retainers, who helped Munthe run his Villa and his sailing craft. The doyen of these, old Pacciale, was still alive at the time. Of him, Munthe wrote :

. . . A devoted servant cancels the name of master. He had become my friend ; the honour was mine, he was a far better man than I. Although he belonged to another world than I, a world almost unknown to me, we understood each other quite well. During the long days and nights we were together, alone on the sea, he taught me many things I had not read in my books, or heard from the lips of men. He was a taciturn man, the sea had taught him its silence long ago. His thoughts were few, and so much the

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better for him. But his sayings were full of poetry, and the archaic simplicity of his similes was pure Greek.

The tradition of affection between master and servant, based on other considerations than mere money, is likely to continue in Italy long after it lingers on elsewhere only in the memory of Colonel Blimp and other diehards. That tradition, with us, goes back to the days when Aeneas buried his old nurse at Gaeta. Doubtless she had some of the characteristics that Munthe observed in Pacciale. Today, in most countries, the individual servant merges into a mass proletariat, paid by the hour ; a class of people without roots, without traditions, without a folk-lore, without songs.

* * *

No need for me to dwell on Munthe's surroundings at Capri. His book on the subject has been translated into thirty languages, and has had seventy-four printings in Great Britain alone. I sometimes wonder if some merit for such a success is not due, in a small part, to a revision of the manuscript (at Munthe's request), by Sir Rennell Rodd, former Ambassador in Rome, who deleted many paragraphs on alarming medical technicalities.

Though always ready to poke fun at his friend, Sir Rennell was devoted to Munthe, and went to stay at San Michele with his bride, on their honeymoon. Munthe was then passing through a phase of acute asceticism, when he went about barefoot and in rags. He tried to persuade his guests to follow his example and to lead 'the hard life'. But the English *sposa* could not be induced to do without baths. Nor did Munthe himself keep up that particular fad for long.

It was not in Capri, but in Rome, that I saw most of the author of that international best-seller, *The Story of San Michele*. During the bicycle craze that swept over Europe at the end of the last century, Munthe and I taught two ladies to ride a bike. One was the Crown Princess of Sweden ; the other was Ella Stephens.

We would take them to the Viale Parioli, which was then in open country, and let them coast down the slope between the Salarian and the Flaminian roads, on the left bank of the Tiber. Two carriages followed sedately behind. The ladies wore very large hats, sat very straight, and seemed to think they were doing something rather fast.

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In those days, Munthe was in his prime. The magnetic qualities of his rather puzzling personality were more noticeable than in his later years. He was undoubtedly a *poseur*, and some people were inclined to believe that even the very real trouble with his eyes was part of his affectation. That he tried to live up to the legend he had created about himself is certainly true, and his pontifical attitudes were sometimes irritating and absurd. But he belonged to a generation that delighted in aesthetic poses. I am not immune from this vice myself.

I have heard Munthe spoken of as a dangerous man and not to be trusted with confidences. Such suspicions may not have been wholly unjustified. Occasionally he could be indiscreet. His practice gave him knowledge of the skeleton in many a cupboard. He was not always reticent about the people whose confidence he enjoyed. He was not malicious, but he sometimes let himself be carried away by his imagination and his sense of humour. He could not resist telling a good story.

His successes (often unsought) provoked the jealousy of other doctors. They said unkind things about him. To these, I paid no attention. But the Princess Antoine Radziwill once told me a piece of gossip that amused me, because it was evident, at the time, that she herself was not aware *who* she was talking about. She had been staying at Karlsruh, with the Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden, and had found her hosts in a state of mental perturbation, because their daughter, who had married the Crown Prince of Sweden, had gone to Italy on the advice of her doctor. The Court of Sweden had not considered that this *Italienische Reise* was really necessary for the Princess's health, and raised difficulties about defraying the expenses. The Grand Duke of Baden found himself morally obliged to furnish her daughter with the requisite funds. And he was annoyed about it.

To accuse Munthe of being a sort of medical Svengali, or a quack and a charlatan, shows only a lack of understanding of his methods. He was a faith healer, and his knowledge of psychology often brought him to pander to the egotism of his patients, by flattery, bluff, sympathy and other tricks of the trade (if you like to call them that). But, apart from a few pious frauds, he undoubtedly possessed the healing touch, which in him was an inborn, personal quality and had

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DON GIOVANNI COLONNA,

DUKE OF CESARÒ

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nothing to do with orthodox medical qualifications. It was this that sometimes provoked the Philistinism of the medical profession. And it is undoubtedly true that, in dealing with various forms of hysteria, he relied more on the hypnotic attraction that he exercised over his patients than on the medical knowledge he had acquired at the University of Upsala, or at the Salpétrière.

Francesco Crispi and Friendship with England

SINCE 1932 I have lived in the new quarter of Rome, called Prati di Castello, where there used to be nothing but open fields at the back of the Castel Sant'Angelo. This modern suburb was built after 1911, and the streets round my house are named after the patriots of the Risorgimento. My windows look out on the Avenue called after Giuseppe Mazzini, and the side-streets bear the names of men, some of whom, when I was a boy, used to frequent my mother's drawing-room.

That I should have known, in my first youth, such survivals of the past, gives me memories that appear inconsistent with my present age. I heard so much about events that occurred before I was born, stories told by men on whom beat the spotlight of history, that I almost came to consider such happenings as part of my own experience.

One of the national heroes I knew best was Francesco Crispi. He has a street named after him in the middle of the town—the thoroughfare that used to be called Capo le Case. He lived near there, in the Via Gregoriana, and was still an important figure in national and international politics, long after other patriots of his generation were dead or on the shelf. He was twice Prime Minister at the close of the last century. An ardent anglo-phil, though a firm supporter of the Triple Alliance, he based his policy upon that alliance, supplemented with a naval entente with Great Britain.

A fiery revolutionist, comrade of Garibaldi, with whom he organized the expedition of 'The Thousand' that delivered his native Sicily from the tyranny of the Naples Bourbons, he was a swarthy southerner, with blazing black eyes and (when I knew him) an enormous, snow-white moustache, the walrus moustache that was characteristic of his epoch. A small, nervous man, and a fighter in

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every sense of the word, in the field of battle and in the political arena. With all this, cool-headed as Sicilians often are (there is snow on Etna !).

I was nineteen when I used to go and see him. He was then out-of-office, in straightened circumstances, and going blind. This blindness accentuated the Homeric touch in the old national hero. His anger, the *saeva indignatio*, that blazed out whenever he deplored the pusillanimity of his political adversaries, had in it something of the wrath of Achilles. And though aged and infirm and on the shelf, ' Achilles was Achilles still '.

Young as I was, Crispi would talk with me as to the son of a patriot like himself. And because I spoke English and knew England, he told me of the opportunity that had been missed by the Italian Government, to initiate a friendly collaboration with Great Britain in Africa. What started the conversation on this subject was my having mentioned that a Scotch uncle of mine, a brother of my mother's, Colonel Norman Chalmers of the 79th Highlanders, was passing through Rome. He had lost part of his left hand, having been wounded in Egypt, at the battle of Tel-el-kebir. Crispi exclaimed : ' Our bersaglieri should have been at that battle, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the highlanders. If I had been in office at the time, I would have sent them ! '

No doubt he would have. This is how the opportunity came and was lost :

On the 24th July 1882, Sir Augustus Paget, British Ambassador in Rome, was instructed to invite the Italian Government to co-operate with England and France in the steps to be taken for the protection of the Suez Canal. The French Government having backed out (when Freycinet replaced Gambetta as Prime Minister), the first communication to Italy was followed by another. This time, Lord Granville informed the Italian Ambassador in London that ' Her Majesty's Government would also welcome the co-operation of Italy in a movement in the interior, which they were of opinion could no longer be delayed and for which they were making active preparations.'

The man responsible for refusing this offer was Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Depretis Cabinet, which had succeeded that of Cairoli. The latter (which included my father

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as Minister of Justice) had fallen in consequence of the French occupation of Tunis.

When talking to me and telling me the history of past events, Crispi showed me a copy of the letter he had sent to Mancini. He had written from London, after having an interview with Lord Granville, at 18 Carlton House Terrace, and also with Mr. Gladstone, with whom he spoke Italian :

LONDON, *29th July 1882*

MY DEAR MANCINI,

I am most sorrowful (*sono dolentissimo*) that you should have declined the offer made you by England, to intervene in Egypt. Please God your refusal does not bring further misfortunes on Italy in the Mediterranean.

You should have accepted without hesitation. When Cavour received the offer to join the Western powers in invading the Crimea, he did not lose a moment. The Government of little Piedmont possessed the courage that is lacking today in the Government of Italy.

Yours affectionately,

F. CRISPI.

The lost opportunity of taking common action in Egypt did not put an end to further possibility of Anglo-Italian collaboration in Africa. Italy and Great Britain helped one another in their common fight against the dervishes and the Mahdi. The town and *mudiria* of Kassala, lying on the River Mareb, in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, was besieged by the dervishes in November 1883. The British garrison held out till the 30th July 1885, when, owing to lack of food, it was forced to capitulate. Kassala was recaptured from the dervishes, by an Italian force under Colonel Baratieri, on the 17th July 1894, and by the Italians handed over to the British (representing the Egyptians) on Christmas Day 1897.

Italians need, every now and then, a statesman of the type of Crispi, to give them a political tonic. Benedetto Croce says of Crispi that he brought to the government of his country

the great benefits and national advancement to be derived from a dominant personality, conceiving the ideas which the Italian people were unable to conceive, opening up paths of which they were unaware, and finding within himself the powers that they did not possess, or could only develop under his rule and leadership.

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Ernesto Nathan and a Journey to Albania

VIA TORINO is a street that leads from the Via Venti Settembre, where Mother and I lived, to the Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore, where I went to a day-school.

On my way there, every morning at a quarter to eight, I would meet the porter of No. 122 escorting a fussy and self-important fox-terrier on a constitutional round the lamp-posts. I would stop and ask if the 'Signorino Maurice' had started out yet. The porter's name was Zeffiro, meaning a soft and gentle breeze. The fox-terrier was more aptly called 'Bulky'. He was stout by nature and inclined to become more so, by over-indulgence among the flesh-pots.

The house that bore the number 122 belonged to Ernesto Nathan, whose son, Maurice, went to school with me. We sat side by side on the same bench and became united in a life-long intimacy, such as school-days leave behind them.

At that time, Ernesto Nathan was Syndic (Lord Mayor) of Rome. And it struck people as incongruous that the capital of Italy, world-centre of Catholicism, should be administered by an English-born Jew. To explain this anomaly, there arose a legend that was generally believed: the legend that Ernesto Nathan was the son of Mazzini. But though it was true that Mazzini, while an exile in London, had frequented the house of old Mayor Nathan and of Sarah, his wife, this was when the future Syndic of Rome was already two years old. So the rumour, as far as he was concerned, was unfounded.

In politics, Ernesto was inevitably a liberal, and liberalism inspired what was called his *irredentismo*, the ideal that claimed for Italy all territories and towns, along the coasts of the Adriatic, that were inhabited by Italian-speaking people and carried on the ancient traditions of Venice.

In the early summer of 1905, while staying with Mother at Campfèr, in the Engadiné, I received a letter from Ernesto Nathan, asking if I could meet him in Milan. He had a project for extending Italian influence over Albania, and thought I might be willing to collaborate. So I took the diligence down the Maloja Pass, and, on arrival, found Ernesto in the house of some relations in the Via Bigli.

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His idea was that we should begin by buying, or leasing, the island of Saseno, in the Gulf of Valona, with the excuse of making some experiments in the breeding of cattle in a more or less wild state.

Albania was then much as it was when Gibbon described it as being " within sight of Italy and less known than the interior of America ". Since Gibbon's day, we have extended our knowledge of America, but are only a little better informed than Childe Harold about :

> The wild Albanian kirtled to his knee
> With shawl-girt head and ornamented gun.

Behind the plate-glass windows of booksellers in Oxford Street and Piccadilly was put out for sale (at the time I was touring Albania) a book by Miss Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans.* She describes the few people who were interested in Turkey in Europe as believing it to be a spot inhabited by Turks (all Moslems and bad) and ' Macedonians ' (all Christians and virtuous).

Four centuries before Miss Durham and I visited Albania, the all-conquering Ottoman had swept over the land, blotting it out from the world's history. And though in 1905 it was still a part of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish officials could not give you a safe-conduct that would really be a protection. They were strongly opposed to all progress, and tore up the old Roman roads, to hinder communications. Yet they could not obliterate the ruins of Venetian castles and of the Appian Way, that led from Rome to Constantinople : traces of two stupendous civilizations, overrun by the conquering armies of an Eastern race.

When passing through Rome, on my way to Valona, I talked with the Marchese di San Giuliano, our Minister for Foreign Affairs. He compared Albania to Brunhilde, sleeping politically, surrounded by flames less visible but more real than those with which Wotan enclosed his daughter.

Among my youthful visions, was that of awakening Brunhilde !

Albania's history goes further back than the Nibelungen saga. It claims such old-world heroes as Alexander the Great, whose mother, Olympias, was an Albanian, and Pyrrhus, and Scanderberg, and Mehemet Ali. The Roman Emperors, Diocletian and Constantine, were of Illyrian blood, and the fierce peoples of the Balkan peninsula,

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once conquered, furnished the flower of the Roman armies. Descendants of Albanian colonists were scattered over the southern provinces of Italy, and over Sicily. The family of Francesco Crispi was of Albanian origin. Their emigration from their native country probably took place when a 'Kingdom of Albania' was ruled over by Sicilian Kings of the House of Anjou.

When I knew them, at the beginning of the present century, the Albanians possessed a mentality and lived in conditions that were more backward than those of Europe during the Middle Ages. They could hardly be said to have outgrown the tribal state. They were ruled by 'the law of the mountain', supposed to be the oldest law in Europe. It contained no provision for the trial and punishment of murder.

During my journey, I acquired some first-hand knowledge of the incredible hatreds, from which the Balkan peoples still reap such a bitter harvest. The folklore of what we now call the 'Southern Slavs' shows that the amiable practice of gouging out a rival's eyes, with a spoon, is both ancient and endemic. During the second world-war and its aftermath, this was done by the Croats to the Serbs, and to Italians, accused of being Fascists. The eyes were then collected and taken to the Slavonic chiefs.

Similar stories figure in a cycle of popular poetry, dating from the fourteenth century, concerning the 'heroic deeds' of Mark Kraglievich. He even took out the eyes of his own sister, to revenge himself for having been betrayed by her husband. And he carried the eyes home and showed them to his mother, who was much distressed. All this sounds almost unbelievable, but it is confirmed by the legend of an aged Saint, who appeared to a Croat warrior and made him the following offer:

'I will do anything you ask. You have only to command me. But whatever I do for you, I will do again, twice over, for a Serb.'

The Croat thought the matter over and then answered: 'Take out one of my eyes!'

I discovered that among the sources of hatred and of strife, in Illyria, religious intolerance was not lacking. And apparently it was not limited to human beings! Even the storks had something to say on the matter. Never by any chance did they build a nest on

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the roof of a house belonging to a Christian. Only Moslem buildings were honoured by their patronage. Such a preference is not so extraordinary as it might be supposed. To the Moslem, the stork is sacred. To the Christian he may be a legitimate object of the chase ! I was told that, in some provinces of Greece, much as Morea the storks disappeared after the country ceased to be a province of the Ottoman Empire.

I can't say that I made friends with the storks, but I made the acquaintance of a couple, and they treated me with a certain dignified condescension. I got so interested in their doings that I would get up as soon as dawn showed through the window of my bedroom, and watch them sending their children off to school. I don't know of any other animal that does this, but more than once I saw a group of a dozen young storks, performing evolutions in the air under the supervision of two, or three, elder birds, evidently instructors in aviation. Those few teachers could not have been parents of the entire class. The stork is voiceless, though it can emit a sort of melancholy whistle. It keeps up the conversation by a sort of tapping sound, produced by the mandibles of its long beak. This sound can be modulated from a *pianissimo* to a loud rattle, like that produced by a machine-gun, or the back-fire of a motor-cycle.

I was at Valona, Durazzo and Tirana at the season when the storks were training their children for their annual departure for Africa, on the 28th August. This is a fixed date (or at least it was in those years) and never varied, which makes one suppose that those birds keep some sort of calendar in their heads.

The annual flight south, with the recently born young, was evidently a serious business. The sicklier specimens among the juniors were killed off, as it could be foreseen that they might not survive the journey overseas. I was told—though I cannot confirm this—that the parent-birds that hatch out more than two eggs, would sometimes push the heaviest of their offspring out of the nest. It would fall to the ground and be left to die : the reason being that the parents let their fledgelings rest on their backs, during the long flight south, and they can do this for two fledgelings, but not for more. Such ruthlessness contrasts forcibly with the legend of the mother-bird remaining on her nest, with wings outstretched, to

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protect her young, when the house below them is destroyed by fire.

At Durazzo, I met a crony of Miss Edith Durham's. This was a huge pet ram, called Napoleon, with curly horns and a massive Roman nose, which the serving-men stooped to kiss, as they passed. When Napoleon wanted a drink, he baa'd loudly, and someone would escort him to a horse-trough, in the yard of the 'han'.

I might continue this chapter with the account of how, during my stay in Albania, I prepared the ground for some events that followed after. But of the seed that I sowed in that field, as in many others, nothing now remains. Memories are left to me of the storks at dawn, of long rides on mule-back, sometimes through rich lands, sometimes through a fragrant scrub, sometimes in the shade of giant olive-trees that had never been pruned. I vaguely remember my escort of Turkish mounted-police (*suvarris*), each man armed with a Peabody-Martini rifle, a sheath-knife and a revolver. These men (so I gathered) were unpaid, and had to cater for themselves as we travelled, except for what I gave them. Their uniforms were ragged, and often in strong contrast with the smart fustanella of the wealthier civilians. But they had good horses, of which they seemed to be fond.

Around me, as we moved from place to place, I saw evidences of a primitive life, such as is described in Isaiah:

". . . and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom . . . and a fierce king shall rule over them."

Lest I should give a wrong impression, I must add that the country-folk were hospitable, as only a primitive people can be. And the Christian women-school-teachers in the larger centres, seemed active, intelligent and enlightened.

Sometimes the school-marm can do more for a country than the diplomats and politicians.

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Pure Economics and Practical Politics

In the Carboniferous Epoch, we were promised
abundance for all
By robbing selected Peter to pay for
collective Paul ;

But though we had plenty of money
there was nothing our money could buy
And the Gods of the Copy-book-headings said :
' If you don't work you die ! '
RUDYARD KIPLING, *The Gods of the Copy-book-headings.*

MAFFEO PANTALEONI—DAVID LUBIN—OLIVIA AGRESTI ROSSETTI

It was said of Gladstone that not only did he make of Finance an art, but that he could speak of it, as if he were the Tenth of the Muses. I owe my first grounding in economics to Maffeo Pantaleoni, who could make even Finance amusing.

He taught ' pure economics ', political economy in the abstract. This science starts from the hedonistic premise that men are moved to act exclusively by the desire to obtain the greatest possible satisfaction of their needs, by means of the smallest possible individual sacrifice. Such a science, considering man as an object of thought, supposes him to be, in every deal, a complete egoist. But in the abstract science, man is represented as an intelligent egoist, who knows what is good for him and is willing to further his own interest by every possible means. In practical economics, this is not so. One must take psychology into account, such things as the pride of doctrinaires in their orthodoxy ; ignorance and the greed that overreaches itself.

If it had been possible—or were still possible—to overcome the selfish policies of the trade unions and their political bosses, and to apply the science of pure economics to such problems as immigration and emigration, it is probable that ' labour ' (in the meaning of labourers and producers in the aggregate, not as the label of a political party) would by now have certain inalienable rights internationally recognized, to the greater advantage of Peace. Without quoting the almost utopistic declarations of the Burlinghame Treaty between the U.S.A. and China (in 1868), the outstanding example is that of

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Australia. In his book, *The Steep Places*,[1] Sir Norman Angell refers twice to this subject. He writes :

> More than a generation since it became evident that if the British Commonwealth, including as it does great empty territories in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, was to duplicate the history of the United States, and become a series of powerful and rich nations, it would be by adopting what was, in the years of American expansion, the American policy of fairly free immigration. All Dominion governments have until yesterday refused even to consider putting down the barriers . . .

In the concluding chapter of the same work, the author demands, for the British Commonwealth, policies permitting a much greater and more rapid development of its resources than do the present restrictive policies. " In the way of the best use of the existing opportunities stand the ingrained habits of thought and feeling, still so strong in Britain and the British Dominions (especially in relation to immigration)."

There is something in Sir Norman Angell's views on economics which makes me think of him as a Maffeo Pantaleoni, brought up to date, and without Maffeo's Voltairian irony. I remember that the latter compared those dog-in-the-manger colonists, who reserve for themselves territories that are too vast for them, to the savages who have need of a large country to hunt in, hunting being their only means of livelihood. Pantaleoni was especially bitter against the supercilious type of philanthropist, who preaches birth-control to the peoples that are poor in territory. He quoted Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, where Scrooge champions a similar selfish philosophy to cut down the surplus population, and is reproved by the Spirit, who tells him not to speak till he knows what the surplus is and where it is.

There is an article about my old teacher in the Supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (thirteenth edition, 1926). He is described as the founder of a new scientific tendency in economics. Pantaleoni was well known in eight Universities, including that of Geneva. His *Principii di Economia Pura* (translated into English by T. B. Bruce, London, 1898) set forth the mathematical foundation on which

[1] Published by Hamish Hamilton, London, 1947.

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political economy is based. He always managed to weld theoretical principles with the elaboration of concrete facts. As Financial Adviser of the League of Nations, he worked on various Commissions for restoring the world's finances after the first world war, and generally found himself on the opposite side of the barricade to the pundits that Kipling calls The Gods of the Copy-book-headings.

The following are some typical extracts from a Memorandum of his, prepared for the International Financial Commission in Brussels. It should appeal to present-day permit-ridden victims of that controlled economy that appears to be inspired more by proletarian envy than by any aspiration to give back to Europe and to the world their former prosperity.

Governments have everywhere, but in different measure, taken into their management and away from private management, a very large series of services for which they are utterly unfit, as ancient and recent experience has proved, viz :

(*a*) They cannot manage railways ;
(*b*) They cannot manage shipping ;
(*c*) They cannot manage harbours ;
(*d*) They cannot manage international commerce ;
(*e*) They cannot manage the commerce in bills ;
(*f*) They cannot regulate the prices of commodities, and
(*g*) They cannot conserve and distribute commodities after requisition.

They have done and are doing all this and more, neglecting their proper functions.

Governments have taken to what is called State Socialism and Paternalism, or general tutorship of citizens, creating innumerable State monopolies, privileges ; laming private efficiency, destroying speculative commerce and industry, turning into crimes absolutely necessary ways of doing business, such as contracts *à terme avec prime*, combines, trusts, competition, hoarding or deferring consumption, refusing to sell under one's own price. . . .

Everywhere, more or less, Governments pay a corrupted Press, forming public opinion, and strong Governments pay foreign Press, bamboozling public opinion in those countries.

Public opinion should be awakened to the economic value of Governmental honesty. Private dishonesty is repressed by courts of law. Unfortunately there are no prisons for statesmen and political bodies.

Every fool can put on taxes. Ability consists in : (*a*) Reducing expenses by giving efficient service for tax-money ; (*b*) Putting on taxes which do not hamper production and trade, or do so less than any other.

If present methods continue, defaulting will be the consequence. The rope

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will break. In their own interests, strong Governments ought to learn salmon-fishing, and weak Governments not to be their instrument.

Pantaleoni believed that *pour gouverner bien il faut gouverner peu.* This does not mean that he was an uncompromising supporter of the *laissez faire* capitalist system, as I have heard it upheld, with becoming gravity by serious-minded people such as old Mr. Fisher-Unwin, President of the Cobden Club (he had married a daughter of Richard Cobden). But Pantaleoni could not resist a slightly mocking attitude, and enjoyed blowing the froth off the flagon of any inflated eulogy, such as is only too common in public assemblies.

My own friendship with him dated from the day when I went up for the *viva voce* examination in political economy, on the occasion of my taking a degree at the old University of La Sapienza. There were three examiners, of which Pantaleoni was one, but it was not he that conducted the examination. He merely presided, as a sort of arbiter. Without quite knowing how we started such an argument, I found myself upholding the following contention : that in practical politics, no economic theory should be accepted as entirely true, or turned down as entirely false. A principle, sound in itself, may be pressed too far. All theories are good up to a certain point, and could be expressed graphically in the form of a parabola, the curve giving varying degrees of usefulness in time and space. Also, the accepted faith of one generation is the heresy of another.

I had been reading a pamphlet by Mr. Balfour, on the subject of Tariff reform, in his usual style of philosophic doubt. He showed his habitual dexterity in evading any expression of his final opinion. While maintaining the view that true wisdom lies in not going too far, I may have used arguments furnished by A. J. B. Anyhow, I found myself getting the better of the two examiners, who were questioning me. Pantaleoni, after listening with an amused smile on his face, decided suddenly to intervene in my favour, and together we carried all before us. I was given a maximum of marks !

This was the beginning of an acquaintance that ripened into friendship. I used to go and see Pantaleoni in his apartment in the Via Giulia, and would find him, in winter-time, wrapped in a huge rug, for the room was unheated, and there were other rugs lying about on various chairs, for visitors to use, if they wanted them.

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There were also various domestic pets: dogs, cats, birds, and a tortoise, for whose benefit the house (apparently) was run. This was a bond of sympathy, for in Mother's house and mine, it was much the same.

It was in Pantaleoni's house that I met David Lubin, the American who, with the support of the King of Italy, founded the International Institute of Agriculture. This Californian from Sacramento was the first real internationalist I ever met, and unlike a good many whom I met later, he was a practical idealist. His was no cloudy ideology. Economic justice was his lodestar, in home politics and in international politics. He viewed it as the outcome of a slow process of constructive organization, which would bring about an ever increasing degree of equity in human relationships, and first of all, equity in exchange. He considered this equity as an essential condition, to ensure the life of Democracy.

From the first page of his biography, written by the Signora Agresti Rossetti, I quote the following extract, taken from a letter, in which he tried to interest Mr. Gifford Pinchot (a member of the Theodore Roosevelt Administration) in the International Institute of Agriculture.[1]

> . . . I think you follow me. But, human-like, you want to know my motive before you can trust me. Well, my motive is not a salary, not a medal, nor social scintillations, nor is it to be Count of Sacramento. I wish to serve the dear old Uncle, Uncle Samuel, and you laugh! But how many better men have given their lives for the Uncle. But there is a higher service still, and that is for the United States of the World. And I am happy to be an humble soldier, a private, in this Army. Do you understand? And when one is such in dead earnest, the Almighty does not mind that he is an ordinary scrub and no educated diplomat. That same Almighty makes him a *persona gratissima* just everywhere; because this is His great fun in His Divine Comedy. And that is the reason that He took common scrubs for His prophets and His great workers, and 'who shall say Him nay?'

I mentioned David Lubin's biographer, the Signora Olivia Agresti Rossetti. She also belonged to the group that sometimes met in Pantaleoni's house. And she, with myself, is one of the last of its survivors.

[1] See *David Lubin*, by Olivia Rossetti Agresti (Little, Brown & Co., New York).

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The Signora Agresti is English-born, though her family is of Italian origin. She is a niece of Dante Gabriele Rossetti, poet and painter, who with Holman Hunt, Madox Brown and Millais, founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Though spiritually Italian, the Signora Agresti carries with her an atmosphere of Chelsea, London's Montmartre, where, in her uncle's day, you could wander down, so to speak, most of English art and letters. She is just what you would expect a Pre-Raphaelite to look like: not colourless, but faintly coloured, like an illustration by Max Beerbohm. Indeed, she might have figured in Max's delightful little book, *Rossetti and his Circle*.

Max Beerbohm includes John Stuart Mill in this circle, so perhaps it is not to be wondered at that it should have given birth to a girl who, in her day, has become an authority on practical economics. The Signora Agresti is at home in several languages. She has acted as interpreter in many International Conferences, before the first world war and after the second. Modest and unassuming as she is, her long experience, combined with a clear and simple style in writing and speaking, has conferred on her a genuine authority in international economics. Her opinion carries weight even within so closed a community as that of the experts in world-finance. She is known as a formidable opponent of international usury. Her ideal is still that which David Lubin brought over from California half a century ago: economic justice in international affairs. This aspiration cannot be classified under any sectarian label.

She acquired her first notions of economics in the years when the misery and exasperation, that were responsible for the conflict between labour and capital, nearly led to bloody revolution. Absorbed, as they are, in the rivalry between present-day ideologies, people have forgotten—or so it would seem—the struggle that, in the last century, almost took on the aspect of organized warfare: the Trafalgar Square riots, and the Chicago bomb outrages, with hired thugs firing on the mobs in free America.

The struggle generally ended in defeat for the workers, who in sullen anger were forced back to their long hours, starvation wages, and dangerous conditions of work, described by Cronin in *The Stars Look Down*. But in time, as their organization became more powerful, the workers were able to force from their employers some

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grudging concessions, thus securing for themselves a higher standard of living and some degree of social security.

These concessions staved off revolution. Had similar concessions been made in the realm of international economics, two world wars might never have broken out.

Final Choice of a Profession

In the spring of 1906, Alberto Sabbatini, brother of an old school friend of mine, came back to Italy from British Central Africa, with a proposition that attracted me, for it offered practical means of settling some Italians on African soil, and offering them work.

Sabbatini had been acting as an overseer, on a plantation belonging to a Scotsman, at Blantyre. He ran the plantation, while the Scotsman drank the *vin ordinaire* of his native heath. He drank so much whisky that he died, and the property passed to his heirs, who were living in Scotland. Sabbatini came to Europe, to get in touch with them and possibly to buy the plantation. Not having enough money, he appealed to me. I furnished the requisite funds, and introduced Sabbatini to my cousins, the Dick Clelands, in London, also to my mother's solicitors, Lindsay & Howe, in Edinburgh. With the latter's help, the property was bought and I arranged to go out with Sabbatini. We were to take with us a group of young Italians who wished to try their luck in new surroundings.

I had my passage reserved, with the others, from Naples to Mombasa, and arranged to meet Sabbatini in Milan, three weeks before the date of sailing. We foregathered at the Hotel Cavour.

Among the guests, staying at the hotel, was the Contessa delle Somaglia, a pleasant, kind old lady, sister to Prince Doria, and to the Princess Colonna. She had often taken a mildly benevolent interest in my doings, nevertheless she surprised me by asking me to her sitting-room and enquiring as to my future plans. Had I given up all idea of entering the diplomatic service? I answered that, for the moment, I proposed to go to British Central Africa, to become a colonial.

In the course of the conversation, I gathered that it was not me the old Contessa was interested in, but her own nephew, Ascanio

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Colonna. Like myself, he had taken the examination for the diplomatic service, but had finished up among the 'also ran'. However, a new *concorso* was coming on. It would serve as an encouragement to Ascanio—so his aunt told me—if I were to try again. However, at that moment, I could not offer the desired incentive.

Then Sabbatini, much to my astonishment, asked me if I still meant to go out to Mombasa with the others. I answered in the affirmative, and noticed that he looked disappointed. It transpired that the ship was crowded and no further accommodation available. Still, I could not see that this mattered.

'We all have our cabins,' I said, 'or at least a berth. What do you want an extra place for?'

'The truth is, I was thinking of getting married.'

'Do you mean that you want my cabin for your future wife?

'That was the idea.'

'And who is *die Betreffende*, as they say in German?'

'Well, so far, she doesn't exist.'

'You are thinking of getting married, before the ship sails, and you do not know who to?'

'Yes.'

'And what steps do you propose to take, in order to secure a wife?'

He explained. And the explanation sounded more reasonable. It appeared that there were some cousins of his, living at Asti. He had not heard of them for some time, but he remembered that, when he had seen them last, there had been a little girl.

'She must be seventeen or eighteen by now. They are nice people. I'm sure I could not do better.'

'Do you mean to tell me that you contemplate asking this girl, who probably does not know of your existence, to marry you off-hand and to start with you for Central Africa by the first boat?'

'Yes.'

'Well, you have nerve! If I had told you that I did not need my cabin any more, what would you have done?'

'Started off, this evening, for Asti, to arrange matters.'

'Far be it from me to shatter love's young dream! If the lady

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THE AUTHOR
Bust by Alexander Peikow, 1942

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will have you, my cabin is yours. I will come on later. You are probably right that one requires a wife out there. But nobody would marry *me* on such short notice. I wish you good luck!'

This conversation took place on a Wednesday. On the following Saturday, Sabbatini reappeared in Milan, and said that everything was settled.

I asked: 'You are really going to be married?'

'Yes.'

'Congratulations! What happened, exactly?'

'Well, it was a little difficult at first. You see, I arrived just in time for the father's funeral.'

'Not a propitious moment, certainly. And then, what?'

'They all thought, naturally, I had come for that. And they were much touched at my kind sympathy. While we were on the way to the cemetery, I kept looking round to see which of the mourners might be my possible fiancée.'

'And you spotted her?'

'Yes.'

'And, later on, you proposed?'

'Yes.'

'And were accepted?'

'Yes.'

'Well, if you do not make a successful colonist, no one will. You are welcome to my cabin.'

Sabbatini was duly married and started off, with his bride, to Mombasa and Blantyre. The marriage turned out very well.

But I never went out, after all. Ascanio Colonna and I both took the examination for the diplomatic service. And this time our two names appeared at the top of the list.

And that is how I became a diplomat.

But I was sorry to renounce the hope of leading our emigrants to a Promised Land. Like the men and women of other races, who have created new worlds for themselves beyond the sea, those hard-working Italian peasants had nations in their eyes.

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Official Interlude in a Changing World

EXTRACTS FROM "THE HANDBOOK OF THE PERFECT DIPLOMAT"

Hic videbis, fili mî, quam parva sapientia regatur mundus.

The CHANCELLOR VON OXENSTIERNA to his son, when sending him on a diplomatic mission abroad, A.D. 1632.

IN May 1907, I went to my tailor, Filippo Mattina, to try on an Attaché's uniform. When it was ready, I took up my duties at the Italian Embassy in Vienna, and began to learn such lessons as a diplomat's life could teach me.

I also began to jot down thoughts and impressions, as I went along : a rudimentary *Esquisse psychologique* of the people with whom I had to deal. Part of this 'Handbook of the Perfect Diplomat' [1] has been published, in the form of extracts, interleaved with the Memoirs of my official career, as set forth in *Laughing Diplomat*. I do not claim that the thoughts and commentaries thus collected were either original or very new. But they may serve—as Samuel Butler once said of his own books—to give me something to read in my old age.

In the following pages are some further extracts. They will serve as an interlude to beguile the way and as a dividing line between my recollections of the years before I entered government service, and the years that followed my return to private life.

[1] If some explanation is needed for the peculiar construction of this book (other than the fact that the story of the years 1907–32 is told elsewhere), I offer the following :

A diplomat's autobiography is the story of a person who might be nameless, even as the designation of the host in an invitation-card, '*L'Ambassadeur d'Italie et la Marquise Imperiali ont l'honneur. . . .*' (only the wife's name is mentioned). In our public career, we are puppets. Only when we pass in through our own front door, do we become ourselves.

The story of a man's private life, though he may be working for the same ideals that he pursued in an official capacity, is a personal chronicle. His responsibilities are his own. He is not acting under instructions. Thus, when serving in the Section of the Ministero degli Affari Esteri that dealt with our occupation of Lybia, I was a cog in a machine. When taking an active part in Italy's expansion overseas, as in the defence, by speech and writing, of such expansion, I did so as Daniele Varè, on my own initiative.

The autobiography enclosed between the covers of this volume may not appear to be a consecutive story. Nevertheless, it is an unbroken chronicle of the author's own hopes and endeavours, his successes and his failures.

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THE ITALIANS (A FRAGMENT)

I REGRET to say that in my country there are fewer patriots than partisans. It may have something to do with the soil and the climate. Ours is a wonderful country, infinitely varied. And the people are more varied than the landscape, so much so that I sometimes ask myself if there are any Italians at all. We are such a mixed lot!

When the Roman Empire declined and fell, there were very few of the old burgesses left: the so-called Quirites. And since then the peninsula has been invaded by Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Byzantines, Lombards, Franks, Frederick Barbarossa, the Normans, the Suevi, the Angevins, the Aragonese, the Spaniards (united under Charles V), the French, the Austrians, Napoleon, the Austrians again, the Germans and the Anglo-Americans. I have not counted the Saracens, who made raids on our coastal provinces and left the hill-towns battered and scarred.

All these have left traces, but a remnant of the original stock remains, underlying the racial strata of foreign importation. Italy might be described as the rest-house of an eternal cavalcade. Our 'yesterdays' are like the 'days' in the first chapter of Genesis ("and the evening and the morning were the second day").

* * *

Rome organized the Christian religion and carried it over the world. But this was not an unmixed blessing to the Italians. With the Papacy, there arose in their midst an international institute, which looked beyond the national life of the people, and was a source of weakness, in as much as it opposed the realization of those national ideals: Unity and Independence.

Yet in the papacy itself we may perceive a characteristic of the Italian people: their tendency to centralize. One infallible Pope stands between humanity and the Creator, in contrast with the nordic creeds that allow each human soul to stand alone, facing the Divinity.

The same centralizing tendency can be observed in Italian art. In Dante's masterpiece, we find the whole material world, and the worlds to come, held within the Cantos of a single poem, the *Divine*

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Comedy. In the greatest masterpiece of nordic literature, Shakespeare's plays, the characters portrayed are as varied as humanity itself. And whereas the personality of Dante dominates his work, the personality of Shakespeare is hidden behind those of his creations.

* * *

On every nation, at its birth, some good fairies confer blessings, and one bad fairy lays a curse. The curse that was laid on Italy in her cradle would seem to be this: that when she grew up and had children, she would see the labour and the intelligence of her sons exploited by others, so that she and they would remain always in a position of inferiority. As late as 1918, when 'peace' was being negotiated at Versailles, Clémenceau resented our claiming parity with the other powers, and said so, with his usual bluntness, to Guglielmo Marconi.

But the bad fairy's curse goes back further than that. In his book on *The Italian Renaissance*, John Addington Symonds describes the supreme part played by Italians in what—to use Michelet's phrase—was "the discovery of the world and the discovery of man". The Sybil of the Renaissance had been offering her books in vain to feudal Europe. They were accepted in Italy. But "an alien monarchy, greedy for gold, a panic-stricken hierarchy in terror for its life, warped the tendencies and throttled the energies of the most artistically sensitive, the most heroically innovating of the existing races".

There is no poetic exaggeration in these statements. No other people have given to the world such a galaxy of heroic figures in the domain of science, of politics and of art; such navigators, saints, pioneers, poets, mathematicians, discoverers. But as a nation, this has availed us little. Italy's great men have not always contributed to *her* greatness. It was typical of this fact that Columbus should have discovered America, when serving a foreign queen, and the Cabotos given Newfoundland to an English King.

And how often has the inventive genius of an Italian been exploited by foreigners, as with Antonio Meucci, the real inventor of the telephone (this was admitted in the Supreme Court of the United States, in October 1888).

Marconi once told me that he would have been a far richer and successful man if he had submitted to the pressure brought to bear

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on him, to change his nationality. Having refused to do so, he had to defend *unguibus et rostro*, his right to the priority in the invention of wireless telegraphy. The matter was settled once and for all, in a court of law. The judgment of Judge Townsend, in the U.S.A. Circuit Court (May 1905), is also a very fine piece of English prose :

> Other inventors, venturing forth on the sea of electrical movement, met the rising tide of the Hertzian waves and allowed them to roll by without appreciating that this new current was destined to carry onward the freight and traffic of the world's commerce. They noted their manifestations, suspected their possibilities, disclosed their characteristics, and hesitated, fearing the breakers ahead, imagining barriers of impracticable channels and shifting sandbars. Marconi, daring to hoist his sail and explore the unknown current, first disclosed the new highway.

* * *

If I can be described as ' a patriot ', it is in the sense that was given to the word in the eighteenth century, when it meant a discontented man, as opposed to the courtier, who professed himself satisfied with present conditions. For me, that mystical, mysterious thrill of veneration for one's fatherland, that we call love of country, does not necessarily imply the same feeling for my countrymen. I have been exasperated by the Italians more often than by any other people with whom I have had to deal. And I sympathize with Dante, who peopled Hell with his fellow-citizens.

> *Godi, Firenze, poi che se' sì grande,*
> *Che per mare, e per terra batti l'ali,*
> *E per lo 'nferno il tuo nome si spande.*[1]

Even when they don't annoy me beyond endurance, I can see—as no foreigner could—the absurdities in the Italian character, and I must laugh at them. But *on se moque de ce qu'on aime.*

THE AMERICANS (A FRAGMENT)

WHILE writing a contemporary History of England (in Italian), I came to the conclusion that the British often brought heroic remedies to

[1] Rejoice, oh Florence, for you are so great,
That your wings beat over land and sea,
And your name is famous throughout Hell !
Inferno, canto 26, *v.* 1.

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counteract colossal mistakes. In this—so it now seems to me—the Americans tend to follow their example ; indeed, to outdo them.

One of the boasts one hears more often among the less cultured Americans is that something of theirs, such as Niagara Falls, the Morgan collections of Chinese porcelain, or a bridge over some estuary, is ' the greatest in the world '. They might say the same of some of the mistakes in foreign policy, made by their leading politicians, and of the relief-measures that the American nation has to pay for, in order to remedy the consequences of such mistakes. Luckily, they are wealthy. With nations, as with individuals, the rich can afford to make mistakes. A millionaire can sometimes take in his stride the troubles caused by his own imprudence and lack of foresight. The poor man goes under for a very similar fault.

So it is with nations. And because political morality is selective and judges by results, what in a great power is condoned as an error, in a small one is condemned as a crime.

I am always a bit afraid of the Americans, not because of anything *they* do, or don't do, but because so many other countries offer them the sincerest form of flattery. You will find an imitation U.S.A. almost everywhere : East and West and North and South.

Also it seems to me that they lead us in the field of advancing technology, at some risk to our personal, spiritual, inner progress. An advance in the standard of living is sometimes obtained at the expense of other, more valuable, things. So it has been in those apocalyptic processes of agriculture, in which the Americans are the world's pioneers. They sometimes make progress at ruinous cost, squandering Nature's irreplaceable resources. Are we to follow their lead in this too ?

I remember (at the end of the second world war) the contempt expressed by American soldiers of the Army of Occupation, when they observed the mellow folkways and certain century-old methods of cultivation, still in use in hill-farms on the Apennines (where the peasants sometimes dwelt in rock-houses). I doubt, myself, whether Italian *contadini* were ever much worse off than American tenant-farmers in the South, and in these difficult times they are certainly more prosperous than the white-collar workers in our cities. But no doubt their methods of cultivation contrasted forcibly with those

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of the Middle West. Yet Italian agriculture is far from being backward; it represents the fruit of a long experience, and an expert knowledge of modern conditions. Large-scale methods, used on our soil, would soon reduce it to a collection of 'dust-bowls'. And even if it be true that in some parts of Italy the peasant's life is archaic, does this mean that he is to be pitied or despised? It was of very similar agriculturists that Virgil wrote: "*O fortunatos nimium . . .*"

I can only express in the form of a platitude the obvious truth that, even if they hitch their wagon to the Stars and Stripes, Europeans should try to preserve their national characteristics (otherwise the tourist trade will suffer!). Bernard Shaw makes this truism the subject of an amusing dialogue in the second act of *The Apple Cart*. King Magnus does not share the American ambassador's enthusiasm at the prospect of the British Commonwealth ending up as a new group of stars in the American flag.

CLÉMENCEAU AT VERSAILLES, AND SOME FRENCH CHARACTERISTICS

After a long world war, the moral cleaning up is more difficult than the material recovery. Any fool—said Bernard Shaw—can make war, but it takes a real statesman to make peace. At the moment when law and order are to replace violence, all the masks should come off, and the cards be laid face upwards on the table. The process is not a pleasant one. When the hypocrisies are dropped, we must expect some disappointments and the revelation of national egoisms and characteristics.

The peace terms that concluded the first world war disappointed many Italians like myself, who had expected to see assigned to Italy one at least of the colonial mandates. Instead of which the German-African empire was divided up between powers that were already surfeited with colonial possessions. Article 13 of the Treaty of London (26th April 1915), defining the terms for Italy's entry into the war on the side of the Allies, was ignored. So were the promises made us at the Interallied Conference at Saint Jean de Maurienne, in April 1917.

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The atmosphere in Paris, during the peace negotiations, could hardly have been more unfavourable to a fair consideration of Italy's aspirations. Mr. Herbert Hoover described that atmosphere in an article, 'The First American Crusade', published in the *Saturday Evening Post* of the 1st November 1941 :

One day, after the President arrived, he asked me what I thought of the situation in Paris. I remarked that the whole air had suddenly become impregnated with currents of indescribable malignity. . . . I was convinced that America was accepted in Europe as the golden-egged goose—as such, our life would be safe, but not the eggs. He was shocked and expressed disagreement that such expressions should be used in respect of men who led those glorious triumphs of democracy. About two months later, he recalled that conversation and remarked : 'I have often agreed with you.'

Here we have an example of that demoralizing sickness of the spirit that brings even victorious peoples closer to defeat than the foe ever could have done. As an instance of that 'indescribable malignity', mentioned by Mr. Hoover, let me outline the policy that Clémenceau recommended that the French should adopt towards Italy. He expounded this policy, during a meeting of the leaders of the French Chamber, on the 21st of January 1919, that is to say, at a time when we and the French were still Allies, and the war not officially over. I cannot guarantee a verbal accuracy, but the spirit of 'the Tiger' is evident in every page :

The mistake that Napoleon III made, in allowing Italy to accomplish her unification, was no less than the other mistake in allowing the unification of Germany. Italy grows in proportion to the demographic diminution of France. In ten years' time, the Italians will be approaching 50 millions, and the French will be 35. Add to this that in Italy there is a re-awakening of all national energies, and the present crisis will only temper them for the future. From this double dynamic plenitude, it follows that Italy, poor as she is in territory and in raw materials, feels an irresistible need and at the same time a formidable force of expansion. . . . The field of this fatal expansion is the same that is held by France, and which France not only cannot exploit, but even has difficulty to keep a hold on, owing to her poverty in men. The substitution of Italy for France is therefore inevitable, unless France succeeds in preventing, or at least in paralysing, the development of Italy. How can it be paralysed ?

By keeping Italy as much as possible in economic subjection, in denying her

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any Mediterranean colonial possession that might be sufficient to give her the raw materials of which she is in need, and obliging her to disperse and to lose her growing demographic strength in transoceanic emigration, such as can more easily be denationalized, and finally leaving her with a thorn in her flesh, both from the sentimental as from the strategic point of view, so that she shall be hampered in any broad-minded Mediterranean policy. . . . In other words, create for her enmities in the Adriatic and in the East ; crush all possible future allies of Italy in the Adriatic and in the Balkans, among the Bulgarians and the Hungarians ; draw the Rumanians away from her ; deny to Italy any growth in Africa ; measure out in the most miserly way any part she may be assigned in Asia Minor ; again, in other words : oppose globally the entire Italian programme of peace. This policy, among its other advantages, may oblige the Italian demographic plethora to flow, at least in part, into France and into French colonies, so as to act as a blood-transfusion of men, made necessary by French sterility.

A policy of delending of Carthage, to be followed towards an ally, as soon as the common danger was over, was selfish, spiteful and mean. It was also short-sighted, for more could have been gained by keeping Italian friendship, while we grew strong, than by fostering our enmity in the attempt to keep us weak. But outspokenly inimical as it is, I can appreciate such frankness better than the plausible pretence at goodwill, in less honest, more self-righteous opponents : such foreign politicians who blandly assure us that, in denying to the Italians what *they* have (and stick to), they have only *our* interests at heart. Colonies would not be good for *us*, even in territories which Italians have made prosperous by their labour. They are too expensive to maintain, and much less profitable in the long run than we were led to suppose.

On the whole, if I am to have an adversary, I prefer a Frenchman to some others I could mention. There is nothing smug about him ; he is avowedly out for the main chance, and the devil take the hindmost. If French diplomats have a weakness, I think it lies in ignoring the truth of their own proverb : *On n'attrape pas les mouches avec du vinaigre !*

Their particular school of diplomacy, which alternates *le beau geste* with a certain ruthlessness, can be explained by the history of France. We find in it, again and again, the old policy that was formulated by the Cardinal de Richelieu : ' My neighbours are my enemies, the neighbours of my enemies are my friends.' To reverse such a policy,

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we would have to guarantee to France the security that in the past she has never attained.

Speaking about his own nickname, Clémenceau once said that every Frenchman was half tiger and half monkey. But their characteristic touch of *sauvagerie* helps to keep them immune to one of the greatest of contemporary evils: the mechanization of thought through propaganda.

The Parisian mind is the only part of French public opinion (and it is not only French) with which I can claim acquaintance, having been in touch with it since the days of the two Cambons, and Diaghilev, and Boni de Castellane. In those days, the Parisian was always *à la page*, and his mind was merry and subtle and fine, with a wit that snapped and crackled.

And the rapid intellectual grace of their causeries! Even simple, homely men were often in touch with the great world of thought, and one might converse with them, with pleasure, on a penny steamboat on the Seine.

CHANGES IN THE BRITISH CHARACTER

During the last hundred years, the mentality of most people in this world has changed more rapidly than in any preceding period of history. I wonder if I am right in saying that the British have changed more than any other people, since Latin quotations left English public life? One still perceives in them traces of the old strains, that of the Puritan and the Cavalier, but mellowed by the passing of time, and by the industrial revolution.

In the Preface to his book of drawings, illustrating *Rosetti and his Circle*, Max Beerbohm says that Byron, Disraeli and Rossetti seem to him the three most interesting men England had in the nineteenth century. Of these three, only Rosetti could possibly figure as a contemporary of our own. Byron and Disraeli, were we to meet them today, would appear hopelessly outdated. But though Rossetti —as Max Beerbohm says—would not have seemed out of place in the Quattrocento by the Arno, he *was* born out of his time in London, "in the great days of a deep, smug, thick, rich, drab, industrial complacency". He and his fellow Pre-Raphaelites revolted against that

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complacency, and they heralded a revolution that extended far beyond the field of art.

I once heard from Rudyard Kipling an authoritative comment on the changes in the British character. This was when he made a speech at the Royal Society of St. George, on the 6th of May 1935. He mentioned Great Britain's quota of dead in the first world war, and spoke of those who had burned out half a life's vitality in three or four years: men who had been incapacitated from effort by the effects of shock, gassing, tubercle, and the like:

'All these men were of average physique, and, but that they died without issue, would have continued the race. The selective elimination of so many men of one type, and their replacement by so many persons of another type and their children, led to an extensive revision of all standards of English thought and action. . . .

'A little later our electorate was enlarged by the enfranchisement of all English women over twenty-one. This gave renewed impulse to the national ideal of an ever-rising standard of living, and the removal of want, discomfort and the accidents of life from the lives of our people. To this end they built up, and were now building, gigantic organizations to control and handle every detail of those lives.'

An important factor in the change that recent decades have brought about in the British character, was foreshadowed by Harold Nicholson, in a 'Rede Lecture', at the University of Cambridge, on the 23rd of April 1937. His subject was 'The meaning of Prestige', and he concluded with a query concerning what might happen to the British character if Great Britain did not achieve again the unchallengeable power in international politics, which even in 1937 she had admittedly lost. He asks: 'Is there danger lest that character may also decline?' And he adds:

I have not that complacency which would lead me to believe that our people are possessed of nobler virtues than are other peoples. We could afford the luxury of gentleness, because we were unafraid. Now that we have lost our sense of security, shall we always maintain our good-humour and our objectivity? Will even our honesty, our candour and our truthfulness remain undimmed? . . . If we are alert and determined, these great blessings will each one be preserved. Yet if we forfeit them, then (however great may be our physical power, however thunderous our guns) British prestige will perish from the earth; and mankind will thereby lose one of the last citadels of tolerance, of gentleness and of reason.

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There is, however, one symptom of strength—as far as I can judge —still noticeable in the British people. I once heard it defined by Monsieur Laval. He said : '*L'Angleterre ne désire ni comprendre, ni être comprise !*' This trait corresponds, in foreign politics, to a similar one in private life. What the typical Briton likes best is to be regarded as a private gentleman, or in other words : to be left alone.

The English are sometimes unconscious of the extent to which they remain isolated from the currents of continental opinion, or if they do realize this, they take pride in it. Yet such isolation is sometimes responsible for what John Morley calls ' epidemics of unreason '.

On the other hand, it would seem to be a contemporary British characteristic to keep abstractions (in which they sometimes include both politics and religion) away from their daily lives. This may explain in part their not un-merited reputation for tolerance. The Covenanters, in Cromwell's day, adopted a creed of religious uniformity and would have compelled it at the point of the sword. But in the nineteenth century we find Lord Melbourne saying : ' Things have come to a pretty pass, when religion is allowed to invade private life ! '

* * *

The daily Press has changed the character of the nations, but not so much, in essentials, as one might suppose. Henry VIII discovered, before *The Times*, that it pays to have a good motive to put forward in justification of British material interests.

Though he is careful not ' to theorize ' over the drama of history, James Anthony Froude draws a philosophical conclusion from the fate of the great expedition, sent by Philip II to restore the Papal authority over England :

> The English nature on that occasion was seen at its very best. The days had not yet come of inflated self-praise ; and the spirit which produces actions of real merit is usually simple in the description of such actions. Good wine needs no bush ; the finest jewels need the least gaudy setting ; and as the newspaper correspondent was not yet born, and the men who did the fighting wrote also the reports, the same fine and modest temper is equally seen in both.

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HABIT-WORDS AND THE MECHANIZATION OF THOUGHT

SEVERAL new factors have entered world-politics during the first half of the twentieth century, though it may be that they are nothing more than new names for old ideas. Bolshevism, Fascism, Democracy, Internationalism are labels slapped on many parcels, with different contents. Future historians may get grievous headaches, trying to find correct definitions corresponding to the habit-words of successive generations.

We are told in Genesis how once the whole world was of one language and of one speech, but while building the Tower of Babel men came to have different languages and were confounded and dispersed over the earth. Having different words for the same thing, they could not understand each other.

Later on, a similar curse was again laid upon humanity. It is not that men use different words for the same thing. They use the same words for different things. But the result is the same. 'Communism', 'Fascism', 'Democracy', mean different things to different people. We use these words as sticks, to beat each other's dogs with.

Words are not like crystals, transparent and unchanging. They vary in colour and content according to the circumstances and the time when they are used.

Look what the English and the Americans, between them, have done to that poor little Italian word, 'propaganda', after adopting it into their own language! With us, it used to mean 'propagation of the Christian faith'. Now it has acquired an almost diabolical significance!

While names change, like lights and shadows on a high mountain range, the elemental factors in history are eternal as the eternal snow. They are the same as those that Machiavelli pointed out in the days of Alexander VI and Caesar Borgia. Men persist in seeing things, not as they are, but as they wish them to be. We put our signatures to paper reforms, but still the conqueror behaves towards the vanquished as Achilles did, when he dragged the dead body of Hector at the wheels of his chariot, and sacrificed twelve young boys on the funeral pyre of Patrocles. While Christianity makes the highest attempt of which the human intelligence is capable, to interpret

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the universe on a principle of justice, mankind continues, always and everywhere, to bow its neck to force.

But force tires, and as it does so, existing situations are revised. This is what is called History.

* * *

An ominous change has come over the civilized world, by the mechanization of ideas. Humanity, like Faust, is on a fair way to sell its soul for that mental ease, which is vouchsafed to those who do not think for themselves. Nations tend to live on infused opinions and to have knowledge pumped into them mechanically, as in Huxley's *Brave New World* (which may be nearer than we think).

Most of our convictions today are nothing more than the reflected image of certain collective movements of ideas. Kinglake pointed out in *Eothen* how difficult it is for anyone living in the East not to be influenced by the general belief in magic, so that one ends by sharing that belief.

The contagion of mass-psychology is exploited by official and non-official propaganda. Through its publicity-bureaus, a government sells its policies to the tax-payer in his own money. Avenues of information are controlled till 'public opinion' becomes almost a meaningless expression. Sometimes, these exaggerations defeat their own ends, and statesmen are hampered or driven to excesses by their own Press and radio campaigns that have got out of hand.

James Truslow Adams writes in his *Epic of America:*

> It has been said, not without a show of reason, by those familiar with the most recent advertising methods, that only cost limits the delivery of public opinion in any direction desired, on any subject. The more money available, the larger the slice of opinion that can be delivered.

These lines describe the situation in U.S.A. under President Taft. It would seem that they are no less true today. But here and there a reaction is visible. The very excesses of propaganda cause a boomerang-return of his weapon on the head of the propagandist. A situation changes overnight, and then we may observe a transfer of intolerance from one side to the other.

Navigation is not easy, as tides alternate over shifting shoals, in shallow waters. But the more light-hearted politicians soon acquire the art of trimming their sails to changing winds.

One of them should write a *Philosophy of the Vicar of Bray.*

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PART II

HARVESTING OF A DREAM

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Massacre of the Innocents

Try as he will, no man breaks wholly loose
From his first love, no matter who she be.
Oh, was there ever sailor free to choose,
That didn't settle somewhere near the sea?

Parsons in pulpits, tax-payers in pews,
Kings on your thrones, you know as well as me,
We've only one virginity to lose,
And where we lost it there our hearts will be!

RUDYARD KIPLING, speaking of his first mistress,
the *Indian Civil and Military Gazette*.

In the Italian Legation at Copenhagen, one of the pleasantest rooms is the pantry. It is a corner room on the first floor, with two big windows, looking out on the royal palaces of Amalienborg. There are four of these palaces, built round a square; the King lives in one of them and receives in another.

You might describe that pantry as a sunny room, if there were any sun to speak of in Denmark, even in summer, when the nights last less than two hours. Anyway, it gets all the light there is and is much brighter than the poky, low-ceilinged rooms on the ground floor, where I worked (when I was Italian Minister to Denmark) and received visitors.

I rarely set foot in the pantry, but Bettina, my wife's, household duties often took her there, and on the morning of the 1st of August 1932 I went to seek her among the silver and the china, to show her a telegram they had just deciphered in the Chancery. The Foreign Office in Rome informed me that I had been placed on the retired list, and instructed me to approach the Danish Government, to obtain their *agrément* to the appointment of my successor.

Thus began, for me, what you might call a second incarnation; the first having been my career as a diplomat on active service.

The telegram, signed 'Suvich' (the newly appointed Under Secretary of State, acting for Mussolini) came as a bolt from the blue. Nothing in the previous correspondence had led me to expect anything of the kind. I was only fifty-two and might have looked forward to many more years of work.

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The discharge did not concern me only. Nineteen of my colleagues were put on the retired list at the same time. This wholesale *dégommage* became known as 'The Massacre of the Innocents'. At the head of the list was our Ambassador in Paris, Baron Romano Avezzana. He told me later that the Quai d'Orsay had manifested a natural astonishment at the sudden dismissal of so large a portion of the Italian diplomatic service, and asked if anything had happened to justify such a liquidation. Baron Romano answered No. It was merely the preliminary to a transfusion of new blood. The French official answered: '*Je comprends! C'est de la ventilation qu'on fait chez vous.*'

A 'United Press' telegram, dated Rome, 5th August, mentioned the matter under the heading: "Mussolini names young Fascists as Ambassadors." It pointed out that only two of the men appointed to replace those who had been dismissed were professional diplomats (one of the two was Augusto Rosso, Ambassador to Washington). The others were newspaper men, who had already been sent by the Duce on diplomatic missions and who had decided to take up diplomacy as a career. My own successor in Denmark was a former journalist. I have no criticism to offer. . . . But I cannot refrain from quoting a phrase of Scialoja's concerning the most flashy of our new representatives abroad: "When he should be a diplomat, he is a journalist, and when he should be a journalist, he is a diplomat."

There is a certain *esprit de corps* among career diplomats, which is not limited to their own nationality. Though I had never cut much ice in diplomacy, my own dismissal caused a certain stir. Sir Miles Lampson (later, Lord Killearn) wrote to me: "I'm rather glad this country's destinies (and mine) do not lie in the hands of these supermen. But frankly, is it not rather monstrous as far as you are concerned?"

Hardly 'monstrous', though perhaps a little unfair. But it is a custom in many countries to consider diplomatic posts abroad as plums with which to reward services to a political party, and as a means to feather the nests of personal adherents to those in power. This tendency is accentuated in times of political change. A new régime takes more interest in distributing lucrative posts among its supporters than in choosing the most suitable men to occupy those posts.

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An editorial in the London *Times*, with the title 'The Tallest Poppies', commenting on the Fascist system of making changes in government personnel, contained criticisms that would have been equally pertinent in other times and in other countries, besides Italy.

I must admit to have felt some pain at the sudden uprooting, though I was careful to utter no complaint. Among others, Ciano (Mussolini's son-in-law), who had been my secretary when I was in China, was prompt to express sympathy. At that time he held the Ministry of Press and Propaganda, and he encouraged me to make use of an unwelcome leisure by writing for the papers. This was a poor substitute for my own chosen profession. I had hoped, some day, to end up as Ambassador in Washington or London. In the ordinary course of events, that is to say, if Mussolini had never come to power, or if he had not felt the need of making transfusions of Fascist blood into Italian diplomacy, it is more than probable that one or the other of our principal embassies would have been mine for the asking. But new brooms sweep clean, and new régimes make room for their own supporters. I might add that just as peasants are suspicious of city-polish, so are the parvenus in politics suspicious of the more streamlined diplomatists, even when they are as unpretentious as I am.

All men, who are happy and successful in their work, gain by experience and by training a special kind of strength, suited to their particular environment. I do not think I am boasting when I say that I was well suited to that much abused, much laughed at, profession, the diplomatic service. I sometimes feel a little homesick for it, even now.

When I got back to Rome, I went to see Mussolini. He received me, standing behind his writing-table in the corner of that huge hall, the Sala del Mappamondo, in the Palazzo Venezia. He asked, rather brusquely :

'Well, Varè. What do you want from me?'

I answered : 'Nothing.'

Then, for the first time since I met him in Lausanne in 1922, I saw a look of real astonishment come into his face. That anyone, in my circumstances, should come to see him, merely out of courtesy and not to ask for anything, must have appeared to him almost miraculous. Yet, why should I have wanted anything from him? Nothing he could offer was worth to me what he had taken away.

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The Spring of 1935—Stresa and the Jubilee

LOOKING back on it, the year 1935 appears to have been full of travel, incident and activity. But it began quietly enough.

I stayed a few weeks at Baveno, on Lake Maggiore, to put the finishing touches on two books in English : *The Last of the Empresses*, and *The Maker of Heavenly Trousers*. Afterwards, I meant to go on to London, to look for a publisher who might be willing to accept them.

The Lago Maggiore represents for me the ideal of a peaceful country life, without the heartbreaking anxieties and catastrophes of agriculture and farming. The view out towards the St. Gothard, with Pallanza and the Borromean Islands, and south towards Stresa, is one of the most restful in the world, even in the full glory of spring, when it all seems almost too beautiful to be true. I have happy childish memories of Baveno, and others, more poignant, when I was there in my first youth. But that, as Kipling would say, ' is another story '. Some day I may tell it you, if you would like to hear.

In April 1935, the English, French and Italian statesmen were meeting at Stresa. I saw something of them both before and after their labours. No one, then, at any apprehension of a dangerous crisis impending between England and Italy. It was hoped, not unreasonably, that England, France and Italy might form a United front against an aggressive Germany. The murder of Dollfuss had occurred eight months before. Germany had withdrawn from the League of Nations and was re-arming.

Mussolini's *riposte*, when he massed troops on the Italo-Austrian frontier, after the assassination of Millimetternich (as the little Bundskansler was called), received, at the time, no effective support either from France or Great Britain, and this slightly modified the Duce's outlook. He complained that the English and French governments had egged him on to an anti-German policy and then left him in the lurch. But eight months later it was hoped that a meeting, on the shores of Lake Maggiore, would strengthen the bonds between us.

At Stresa, Great Britain was represented by Ramsay MacDonald and Sir John Simon. France by Flandin and Monsieur Laval. When

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we consider the result of their discussions round the green baize table, it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that most of what was said and done was beside the point. Much time was spent in discussing the situation in the Balkans and in preparing for a meeting of Balkan statesmen, who should have foregathered in Rome (but never did). A lot was said about the attitude of the Powers towards Hungary, whose revisionist aspirations were considered dangerous by Jugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The other powers looked upon these aspirations with a platonic and ineffectual sympathy.

With regard to Nazi pressure on Austria, the French spoke of applying sanctions to Germany, but MacDonald said that such sanctions were likely to do more harm to those who applied them than to the power against whom they were directed. There followed a game of battledore and shuttlecock, in which each delegation tried to make out that the fate of Austria was of supreme interest to some other power but not to themselves. Monsieur Laval maintained that the independence of Austria was principally an Italian interest. Mussolini (after the others had had their say) answered that he had no reason to be nervous about Austria. Even if it were to be invaded by Germany, this would not necessarily imply a danger to Italy. There was an excellent frontier. He felt quite capable of defending it. If to anybody, the Austrian question was primarily of interest to England. Its occupation by Germany would be a first step towards the Bosphorus and the East. Ramsay MacDonald seemed to find this argument rather far-fetched. And he added that, in his opinion, Austria was a ripe fruit, ready at any moment to fall into the lap of Germany. This could not be prevented. (I spoke about the matter, later on, with Ciano, who agreed with MacDonald. He believed that, if Italian troops had entered Austria after the murder of Dollfuss, they would have found more than half the population ready to oppose them, and siding with the German Nazis.)

No mention was made of Ethiopia.

Yet, at the time of the Stresa Conference, the Gavinana and Peloritana divisions had been mobilized in Italy, and our military stores were daily passing through the Suez Canal. The British Government was well aware of Mussolini's intention to move into Abyssinia. They expected our action to be in the nature of a

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protracted and increasing military pressure ; not a sudden concerted attack, with the intention of going through with it, once and for all. This may, indeed, have been Mussolini's first idea on the matter, and it might have been possible to carry out, if the Negus had not been given every reason to believe that he would receive effective military support against the Italians. But, at Stresa, the future was still nebulous. The Italian experts could not enlighten anybody on Mussolini's intentions, for they did not know what these were. Probably he did not know himself. His projects changed according to circumstances and his own varying moods.

The British Delegation at Stresa numbered among its members the Foreign Office expert on Ethiopian affairs, Mr. Thompson. He sat about on the hotel sofas and discussed things in general with his opposite number in the Italian Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Signor G. B. Guarnaschelli. The opportunity was there for the British to have made known their opposition to any move of ours in Abyssinia before Mussolini had irretrievably committed himself. And it may be added that, if the Foreign Office was anxious about the matter, at that time, it was for no reason that could be described as hostile towards the Italians. Our collaboration in Europe was then considered indispensable, if concerted opposition was to be offered to German action in Austria and elsewhere. It was feared that a colonial campaign might weaken us, just when it was essential that our military efficiency be in no way impaired. Of all the moral crusade that later on was engineered in England, to ensure a majority in the coming elections, there was, at the time of the Stresa Conference, no foreboding and no trace. All was peace and amity.

The minor lights of the British and Italian delegations partook of a convivial 'fish lunch' at the Isola dei Pescatori. The African experts, who had come to the Conference in case they should be wanted, gave each other some assurances about the undefined Somali frontier and the flow of the waters of the Lake Tsana down to the Nile. This was a matter that the British Government had once tried to settle directly with the Ethiopian Government, and had failed to come to an agreement. The mere fact that the question was discussed with the Italians, even *sub rosa*, was proof positive that a move of ours into Abyssinia was considered with no great disfavour.

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I learnt afterwards that members of the British Delegation had discussed among themselves whether, or no, to raise the question of Ethiopia. I do not know why they did not do so. Perhaps they felt hurried, in view of the imminent meeting of the League of Nations Council at Geneva. At most international conferences, the principal anxiety of the delegations is that some formula be found by next Saturday, so that they may conclude their labours before the week-end !

Sir John Simon was once accused, by Lloyd George, of " sitting on the fence till the iron entered into his soul ". He appears to have done so at Stresa. Whether it is fair to blame him for this, I cannot say. But Christopher Hollis, in his very impartial book, *Italy in Africa*, writes : " It is perfectly certain that, through their egregious silence at Stresa, the British Government must take a certain share of the responsibility for the subsequent catastrophe."

Mussolini himself might quite safely have taken the initiative and played his hand boldly, but with diplomatic subtlety. He might have expressed frankly what were his thoughts at the time :

' We are here to measure the forces that we can oppose to the Germans if they continue to advance and to threaten. Each of us should specify his own quota, his possible contribution to the common action that may become necessary. For my part, I am willing to do so. Indeed, I have already proved my goodwill after the assassination of my friend Dollfuss, who was murdered while his wife and children were my guests in Italy. You may count on me to be at your side. But this must not exclude any action that I may consider necessary to safeguard Italian interests and realize Italian aspirations in Africa.'

Even if it is true that Mussolini, like Sir John Simon, never used the diplomatic instruments that were there, at Stresa, to do his behests, he did not fail to make his meaning clear, or his intentions. The Conference concluded with a final resolution, that afterwards figured in a communiqué. The text was circulated at the last meeting, so that the delegates might signify their approval, or their dissent. It spoke of " opposing by all practical means any unilateral repudiation of treaties, which may endanger peace . . . " Mussolini took out his pen and added in his own handwriting the significant words " in Europe ". And he looked round to see if his colleagues had any

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objections. Laval merely smiled. Ramsay MacDonald said 'Yes. I know your views . . .'

I must add (as I was not present) that I have heard another and slightly different account of this episode. One of our own delegates told me that, as far as he remembered, the words "in Europe" were already there, in the final resolution, as prepared by the drafting Committee, and Mussolini merely drew attention to them at the last meeting of the Conference.

Anyway, the expressive gesture of Mussolini's was afterwards confirmed by Monsieur Flandin and recalled by the Duce himself, in an interview with Mr. Ian Munro, for the *Morning Post* (17th September 1935). Later on, when in conversation with Alberto Pirelli, Mussolini listened without animosity to a criticism of his handling of the Ethiopian question, and he said that he had thought himself authorized to proceed as he did, both by the talks he had had with Monsieur Laval, in January 1935, and by the silence of the British Ministers at Stresa.

* * *

From Baveno, I proceeded, in April, to London.

I do not think that anybody loved the British Isles more than I did, since my first youth and well on into middle-age. I even thought it incumbent on me to get my countrymen to know the English better and to appreciate them more. With this object in view, I wrote, in Italian, a contemporary *History of England* and published it, at my own expense (old Commendatore Bemporad would risk no money himself on such a venture). The book was intended originally to cover the period between 1837 and 1919. But because I described the relations between Italy and England as being those between two democratic states, and this, under Fascism, was no longer the case, the third and fourth volumes, although ready to print, were never published. My superiors at the Ministero appeared much impressed by the laudatory reviews of the first two volumes, in the *Westminster Gazette* and *The Times Literary Supplement*. Mussolini remarked that it was a fine edition, adding however that he had no time to read it.

Like Fritz in *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*, who wanted to be a schoolmaster in order to learn how to read and write, I wrote my

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History of England in order to learn something about it myself. It was a labour of love.

Since I was a boy, England and Scotland offered a happy hunting-ground for my holidays. Whenever I arrived in London, I felt a thrill as the boat-train approached Charing Cross, with a view over the roofs and the smoky, wind-blown chimneys (but sometimes there was a fog, and then it seemed as if London were no longer there !).

The English smells would greet me : smells of bacon, of tea, of soot and Harris tweed, of stout and whisky and newly-mown lawns. In my youth, the station platforms were dimly lit by gas, and there were, of course, no taxis (when they made their first appearance on London streets, they were hailed as ' sparrow-starvers '). The drive to my grandmother's house in Collingham Road, South Kensington, would be taken in a four-wheeler, with straw at the bottom of the cab. Often, some poor wretch would run behind, to earn a few shillings by carrying heavy trunks into the house and up numerous flights of stairs.

I have pleasanter recollections of the hansoms, taking the dip in Piccadilly with a jingle of the harness bell accompanying the clip-clop of hoofs, when I went out to dinner at dusk on a summer eve, with my shirt-front catching the light as I leant forward (unless the weather was bad and the cabby had to lower the glass window against the splash of rain). As late as 1939, it sometimes happened that I heard a double whistle on a London street, and I would look round, half expecting to see two hansom cabs race for a fare from opposite directions, and draw up with a slithering of hoofs and mutual abuse by rival Jehus.

Besides echoes and ghosts of Victorian England, other things lingered on unchanged in recent years : week-ends in country houses ; running horses and silken jackets at Ascot ; muslins rippled by the breeze, and long cool days by the river, with lunch under a club-tent at Henley.

The ' season ' of 1935 represented a very creditable effort on the part of the Old Order, to make us believe it could still hold its own in a world where the great, small courtesies had been voted obsolete, and pounds were no longer made of gold. I got caught in a social whirl that brought to my mantelpiece a pile of invitations to luncheons

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and dinners, balls and week-end parties. The excess of demand over supply enhanced the value of a former diplomat, old-fashioned enough to leave cards where he had dined and sometimes even to send flowers to a head-hunting hostess. My diary of those hectic months reads like extracts from the Society News in a penny newspaper. Even *The Times* found space to announce that I was present at a dinner-party, together with the Duchess of Norfolk and the Marquess and Marchioness of Salisbury. If I remember that dinner, it was for another reason. I found myself seated between Marta Abba, the actress who is supposed best to interpret Pirandello, and the Hon. Mrs. Walter Runciman. The latter said a thing that left me gasping with astonishment: the sort of remark that Dickens might have put in the mouths of the Brothers Cheeryble. Our conversation had got round to the subject of Happiness and its rarity. Mrs. Runciman did not share the common opinion as to its being uncommon, or fleeting. 'I,' she said, 'have always been perfectly happy. I *am* perfectly happy, and I never expect to be anything but perfectly happy!'

I asked: 'Have you any children?'

She said she had, and they had never given her any anxiety. I went on to enquire if the fact that her husband was in the government did not occasionally represent a source of mental worry. She answered: 'Certainly not!'

Mrs. Runciman's appearance carried out her claim to bask in unbroken rays of felicity: a good-looking and rather plump lady, with rosy cheeks and grey hair. I never met her again, but I have often envied her tranquillity of mind in a world so full of *malades imaginaires*. But I confess that I found Marta Abba more human. She told me she was having a humpy time learning enough English to act the part of the Russian Princess, turned lady's maid, in *Tovarich*.

Meanwhile, people's thoughts were directed to the coming celebration of the Jubilee.

I believe I am not far wrong in saying that it was a happy event in the chimpanzee family at the Zoo, which inspired the subsequent festivities to commemorate King George V's accession to the throne, twenty-five years before. Many of the pundits of the Zoological Gardens used to congregate for lunch at the round table in the corner,

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at the Brook Street end of the Savile Club dining-room. It was their idea to give the name of Jubilee to the baby chimpanzee. Their decision was announced in an article that appeared next Sunday in the *Observer*, and this was the first time that the sabbatical year was brought to the notice of the public, as with a flourish of trumpets.

As the preparations for the Jubilee grew in intensity, my second daughter, Diana, came over to share the fun. She had a room at Claridges, and I a guest-room at the Savile, so we lived next door to one another, and I spent in a week what she did in a day. Diana did not much enjoy London society: she complained that it was too large a community for one foreign girl to make herself at home in. You never seem to meet the same people twice.

She and I motored down to Knole, where she found a kindred spirit in the American-born Lady Sackville. The latter did not take kindly to the English habit of the hostess pouring out tea for everybody, so I enjoyed the unusual sight of a daughter of mine performing that ceremony in the stateliest of the stately homes of England.

I had made myself a mental picture of Knole, when reading *The Edwardians*. After seeing it, I have remained with a confused memory of russet roofs and squat grey towers, of Water Courts, and Pheasant Courts and Brown Galleries, of tapestry in a Venetian room and Jacobean wainscoting in a ballroom. Also of two long wine-glasses for stirrup-cups, one called My Lord's Conscience, and the other My Lady's Conscience. One is taller and more capacious than the other. I can't remember which.

British castles and Italian palaces required more of their owners than money, supposing that to be forthcoming. They ask each successive generation to sacrifice itself to a tradition of magnificence that no longer impresses young people, or attracts them. When Diana and I left Knole for London, her first remark as we drove through Sevenoaks was: 'How I understand that the younger members of the family don't live there!'

At Knole one breathes the air of Elizabethan England. It would hardly be surprising to meet Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, riding up to the outer doors, wearing a hunting-suit of Lincoln-green. I stayed a few days at another country-house where the atmosphere

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was Victorian. But the ghosts of the Past were no less characteristic of a golden age.

My wife's cousin, Lady Normanby (known in the family as 'Bee') asked me down to Mulgrave for Whitsuntide. As Yorkshire is Bettina's home-county, I wrote to her from there, endeavouring to describe surroundings that had been those of her youth. Bettina kept my letter. In reading it over, today, I seem to find in it something more than the account of a week-end in a pleasant country-house, in sight of the grey North Sea. Like some of the chapters in *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, it recalls a vanished civilization: the gilt-edged, candle-lit days of Merry England!

MULGRAVE CASTLE
Saturday, 8th June 1935 (written between 11 p.m. and midnight, before going to bed)

I travelled down here by the Great Northern as far as York, and thence in a local train that crawls through the East Riding and up the coast, with prolonged sojourns at every station and not a few sidings. We ambled along in so leisurely a fashion, we might almost have dallied with the butterflies, afloat over the meadow-sweet and the forget-me-nots.

Gazing drowsily out of the carriage window, I saw the names of places that must be familiar to you: Kirkham Abbey on the banks of a little river (you may know what it is called); Howard Castle among thick woods; Melton, where a charabanc of excursionists waited at the level crossing, and some boys on an orchard fence waved their caps at the passing train. Rooks called to one another in the high elms; children picked flowers in the meadows; girls in cottage-gardens hung out the washing to dry, and cotton garments swelled out in the sea-breeze. Just outside Rollington, an adverse signal kept us waiting long enough for the engine-driver to exchange gossip with some navvies at work on the line, while a pair of huge Shire horses, their fetlocks well feathered, grazed amicably a few yards off. There is an Arcadian sleepiness about English landscapes in summer-time, nor is a freckled Amaryllis lacking, with a wreath of cowslips, to dump on Strephon's brow!

Although we are in June, the big trees are just beginning to come into leaf, and the hedge-rows are gay with flowers that in Italy are long since over. The honey-bee is on the broom, grey sheep are fattening in the valley-pastures . . . The little amber-coloured streams all seem to run *away* from the coast. Are they loth, I wonder, to plunge into the cold North Sea?

Bee has put me in a downstair suite. The furniture, I think, is Georgian (if not older), but the bedroom must have been done up afresh in the days of the Bedchamber Question. You remember the story? When about to take office, in 1839, Sir Robert Peel objected to Lady Normanby, wife of

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one of the principal Whigs, remaining on at Court, as the closest household companion of the young Queen Victoria. But the latter would not consent to a dismissal that she conceived to be contrary to usage and was repugnant to her feelings. Peel refused to modify his request, so Lord Melbourne returned to power, or rather crept again into office behind the petticoats of the ladies-in-waiting.

I also have a 'bedchamber question', which puzzled me very much, but now I have solved it! There are two peculiar pieces of furniture on either side of my bed, the nature of which I could not understand. They are funnel-shaped (the smaller end rests on the floor) and topped with pink marble and a decorative edging in gilded metal. The wood may be rose-wood. It looks very precious. But there is no door, or opening, as in a *table de nuit*. Yet some vertical and horizontal fissures show that the contraption *could* be opened, if one knew how.

While I ought to have been dressing for dinner, I kept fidgeting with the dam' thing, pushing and pulling. Only when I essayed to lift the marble top, was the mystery solved. Then the apparatus sprang to life, like a Jack-in-the-box, revealing what the French call *une chaise percée*. Such were the 'conveniences' of aristocratic bedrooms, before the days of modern plumbing. A future generation may turn them into cocktail-bars!

In my bedroom, there are pictures of the Royal children (Edward VII and the Empress Frederick, when still in the nursery). Also a portrait of the Prince Consort, wearing a complete suit of armour. His fat, bourgeois face with its Victorian side-whiskers, looks out incongruously above the shining cuirass and steel gorget.

A more interesting picture hangs over the grand piano in the drawing-room. It dates from the year 1605 and represents a good-looking young woman, in deep mourning, but with a tantalising, ironical smile that seems to mock the onlooker, whose eyes meet those in the canvas. This is the daughter of James I (and therefore a granddaughter of Mary Queen of Scots). Her first husband was the Earl of Anglesea; when he died, she married a Normanby. The background to the portrait is a view of the royal palace of St. James, and up near the top is an inscription in French rhyme:

Puisque le Comte d'Anglesea mourut sans remords,
J'avons que mon deuil n'est qu'un dehors!

The lady in the picture does not look as if her character was hard or bitter. It must have been nothing more than a whimsical sincerity that admitted to feeling no regret for husband No. 1.

My fellow-guests are Lord and Lady Rockley. Before being raised to the peerage, he was the Hon. Evelyn Cecil. It surprises me that anyone who bears the historic name of Cecil should condescend to accept the title of Baron, but I suppose there are advantages. Lady Rockley is an authority on gardens, and recently she has been writing articles in the papers about them. She gets

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five pounds apiece for these articles. She said: 'Evelyn is rather ashamed of me!'

There are also a mother and daughter, and the latter has the most beautiful hair I have seen for a long time; the real Titian bronze, which is erroneously supposed to be common in Venice. Her name is Ann Hope.

Bee is much shocked because I told her that Diana has had an offer, in Paris, to do a film with Josephine Baker.

'*My* cousin! My beautiful cousin! To go on the stage with a negress!'

Anyhow, I don't suppose that anything will come of it.

I like this place, even if I don't fit into the landscape as well as I should. It is pleasant to retire every now and then into this older England, with *chaises percées* on either side of your bed, and family portraits of royalties that were taken more seriously then than they are now.

But I regret not being able to find any portrait of the Marquess of Normanby who was once British Minister at the Granducal Court of Tuscany. In my mind, I can see him strolling up the Lung 'Arno, in a brown frock coat and a top hat of light-coloured beaver. He is still remembered in the City of the Red Lily, as having kicked up the hell of a row, because he had not been given his right place at table, when dining with the Grand Duke.

It seems to me more fitting that a Marquess of Normanby should be a diplomat than a clergyman, as Bee's late husband was. You must have known him better than I did. I was a young sprout of eighteen, when we first met in Scotland, and we motored together from Montrose to Glamis. In those days, motors were a novelty, and we caused quite a sensation, as we puffed wheezily up the Vale of Strathmore. Lord Normanby was a friend of the old Earl, whose golden wedding was about to be celebrated in a few days' time. After our call, when we started back, the younger members of the Bowes-Lyon family stood outside the hall door, to watch us depart. They expected, no doubt, that we would dash off at a terrific speed. Instead of which we crawled up the avenue even slower than the train that brought me here today.

The almost pastoral tranquillity of Mulgrave (where there was not even a telephone) was a pleasant rest after the hectic life I led in London, looking after Diana, especially when Ciano and Edda Mussolini came over for a few days and stayed at our Embassy.

Ciano loved London and said that the climate suited him. Edda, I saw little of, but I got mixed up in a visit she paid to *The Times* premises. Geoffrey Dawson, the Editor, was an old friend of Bettina's, and I went to a tea-party in the little garden of his house. Hearing of Edda's intended visit to Printing House Square, Dawson asked me to come along too. But I mistook the hour, and Geoffrey Dawson never learnt that Edda was on the premises till she was

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DIANA

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actually getting into her motor, to leave. He missed her by a split second. On the whole I think he was relieved to have avoided a *corvée*.

Ciano showed me an article in the French *Journal des Débats*, which alluded to the possibility of the Germans endeavouring to put the Powers in the presence of a *fait accompli*, such as the military occupation of the Rhineland. The article concluded by saying that, in this case, France could count on the support of Italy. I asked Ciano if this were true. He said that he could not predict the future, but it was certain that our relations with France had never been better than at that moment. This was regarded with suspicion by the champions of the *status quo* (he mentioned Titulescu), who feared any Franco-Italian collaboration, because of its realistic tendency to treaty-revision in the matter of agreements concerning the Danube.

Meanwhile Diana complicated our existence by acquiring a parrot. I suggested that, like the chimpanzee at the Zoo, it should be called 'Jubilee'. Instead of which, it was named Loreto.

I do not know to this day who gave the parrot to Diana, for she had forgotten the donor's name. She described him in her rather peculiar English: 'Oh, Loreto was given me by a man . . . a lovely man . . . He is as pale as a sheet. He lives in an apartment all panelled in black velvet, with bowls of yellow orchids. He has a lapis-lazuli bath. And he sits all day in the house and sews . . .'

Austen Chamberlain asked us to lunch. Diana told him about the parrot, adding the description as quoted above. A frosty light shone for a moment in Chamberlain's eye-glass, as he remarked: '*Not* very good company, I think!'

Diana left for the continent rather suddenly. There was no cage to put Loreto in; only a perch, and they travelled by air. I found the whole business so nerve-racking that I refused to see Diana off.

Half an hour after her departure, there was a telephone message from the French Embassy: '*Prière de dire à Mademoiselle Varè que les perroquets ne peuvent pas entrer en France.*'

I wondered what would happen to poor Loreto when he reached the aerodrome of Le Bourget and was refused admittance. Anyway, I could do nothing about it. Next day I received a telegram from Paris: 'All well. Love. Diana.' No mention of Loreto.

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It was only when I arrived back in Rome, that I heard a garbled version of what had occurred. Diana was off again, this time to Vienna, where she was staying somewhere in the Wienerwald, taking part in the shooting of a film, *Marie Berchirtcheff* (or some such name) with Hans Jeray in the principal part. But Loreto was at home, and he had eaten most of the wooden frame of a tall, leather arm-chair that stood opposite my writing-desk.

It appears that, on the day of their arrival in Paris, the Customs officials had begun by saying that parrots could not enter the country. To which Diana replied that he *had* entered the country. There he was ! And that, if they would send someone with her (and Loreto) to the Quai d'Orsay, she could arrange matters to the satisfaction of all concerned.

This was done. I don't quite know *where* they actually went, but in the end, Diana and Loreto (after some parleying) were ushered into the presence of some former colleague of mine. I think it must have been the Comte de Martel. He asked what the devil she wanted.

' *Damien ! Faites moi entrer en France avec cet animal !* '

De Martel stared indignantly at the parrot, who met his gaze with indifference, and croaked ' Loreto ! ', as if introducing himself.

De Martel answered : ' Diana ! You may come into France with a tiger for all I care, but go away and leave me in peace ! '

On the strength of this authorization, Loreto was allowed to stay a few days in Paris, on his way to Italy.

* * *

If there is one form of brag that sets my teeth on edge more than any other, it is the kind that boasts of literary success. Despite this premise, I must admit that my stay in London, during the spring of the Jubilee year, was eminently successful. Not only were my books accepted for publication, but the *Heavenly Trousers* was promptly taken up by the representative in London of a leading American firm, for publication in U.S.A. An unknown author, as I was, writing in a language not his own, I felt that I had conquered the Land of Canaan. And I decided to go to New York, to keep in touch with my publishers there.

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I was encouraged in this project by Ciano, who found me one day, after my return to Rome, sitting on the sands by the sea at Castel Fusano, correcting the proofs of the *Heavenly Trousers*. He sat down beside me and picked up a sheet of the galley-proofs, to see what it was all about. He happened to light on a page where I quoted the Chinese proverb: *He who rides the tiger cannot dismount.*

'That,' said Ciano, 'is very true!'

When I told him that I was thinking of joining Margherita, who was over in the States, staying with the Crane family at Cape Cod, Ciano said: 'When you go, get in touch with our embassy in Washington and see if you can't give Rosso a helping hand. He is having a difficult time, for public opinion is dead against us in the Abyssinian question.'

I said I would do my best, but that I did not want to tour the United States as a propagandist.

I think it was only then that I began to realize how the Ethiopian question had grown in importance and even changed its character, since the placid days of Stresa.

'Hail Columbia!'

AFTER going with Bettina to Siena, to see the 'Palio', in August 1935, I embarked at Naples on the *Rex*, for New York.

I had a fellow traveller in a young Italian diplomat, Bergamaschi, who was on his way to our embassy in Washington. He was an excellent pianist, and soon found a kindred spirit on board, in the shape of Mr. Murray Jacoby, a gentleman connected in some way with Wall Street (he telephoned there every day, to find out what stocks and shares were doing). But he looked upon himself also as a retired diplomat, like myself, for he had been Ambassador Extraordinary of the United States at the Court of Ethiopia, on the occasion of the coronation of the Negus.

When not playing duets with Bergamaschi (on two pianos, in the ship's concert room), Mr. Jacoby would give me his views on the political situation. He seemed to be under the impression that if he and I were to agree to some solution on the Abyssinian question, we could obtain the approval of our two governments (and of other

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governments as well), and they would get our proposals carried through.

His mission to Addis Ababa had left Mr. Jacoby with a marked sympathy for the Ethiopians. On the other hand, he showed a singularly open mind in the matter of Italy's needs and aspirations. And he suggested to me, quite seriously, that we Italians should leave Abyssinia alone, on condition that France should cede us Tunisia. I cannot imagine any Italian statesman that would not have jumped at the offer.

Without any prompting from me, Mr. Murray Jacoby saw for himself the injustice of a country like France, with a rapidly decreasing population, holding a colonial empire of four million square miles, while a country like Italy, whose workmen had to emigrate in order to earn their living, was accused of selfish imperialism, for claiming that her birthright be not so utterly disproportioned to her birthrate. In 1935, France's population was steadily approaching what it had been in Napoleon's day (when she sold Louisiana to the United States). Her colossal dominions overseas had to be governed by a skeleton crew of French officials, policed by black troops and defended by the British Navy !

Our crossing of the Atlantic was not uneventful, as is shown by the following entry in my Diary, dated 27th August :

Gulf Stream. Very hot and damp ; the air steamy, with lowering clouds. Stopped engines and stood by to pick up the owner and crew of a small skiff (three tons), carrying Mr. Welch and four sailors. They had left Bermuda on the 18th. Their craft was disabled and they had been four days at the pumps. I hear that ' Welch's Grape Juice ' used to be almost a national beverage during Prohibition. Mr. Welch was on his way to join his wife on the Riviera. She had advised him to take a liner, like everybody else, and not risk his life on a cockleshell. He has now sent her a wireless message : ' You were quite right ! '

We docked in New York on the 29th. My eldest daughter, Margherita, was at Chelsea Piers to meet me.

* * *

My letters to Bettina from New York, Washington and the houses of friends in the country, have this in common with similar epistles, written in those years from England, France, or Italy. They do not

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illustrate any prearranged activity, as they might have if I had been still in the Diplomatic Service. My time was my own, and I used it to look on at the pageant of life in a foreign country, without having to send reports home, or await instructions concerning this question, or that.

In New York, as during the preceding months, I corrected proofs and debated questions concerning wrappers, illustrations and publicity. Meanwhile, my former colleagues at the Italian Embassy in Washington came to regard me as a sort of ' elder statesman ', and were pleased to have me round.

Though I refused to make a tour of lectures, I was willing to speak informally whenever, by doing so, I could give some encouragement to my nationals, during a period of political tension.

Though I had left for the States with a bundle of introductions, I began by making a friend on my own. Her name was Rose : a ' non ruminating artiodactyle ungulate mammal ', otherwise the hippopotamus in the small zoological garden at the Prosperity Fountain end of Central Park. Rose's ancestors are disrespectfully mentioned in the Book of Job. The family name, in those days, was Behemoth (" The shady trees compassed them with their shadow ; the willows of the brook did compass them about").

I presume Rose's name was given to her in view of the lovely shade of pink round the eyes and jowl. She had a nasty, hard, concrete floor to lie on, instead of the nice soft mud along the banks of the White Nile.

I generally found Rose half asleep, with her chin resting against the vertical bars of her cage. When she saw me, she would open her mouth wide, as a hint that I should throw something into it, despite a notice to the effect that you might not ' feed, or annoy, the animals '. These two injunctions contradicted one another. If you didn't feed the animals, it annoyed them extremely. I compromised (and avoided the 25 dollars fine) by feeding Rose with buns when nobody was looking.

The seals seemed fairly happy, playing ' king of the castle ' in their swimming-pool. But Chang, the elephant (habitat, India), walked round and round his narrow cage, doing figures of eight, the picture of tragic boredom. And the otter scratched despairingly at the hard concrete floor, in the vain hope of making a hole.

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Sometimes I took a bag of peanuts and sat on a bench, along one of the asphalted paths in the Park, and the squirrels came and helped themselves, darting about silently as beams of light, eating out of their little hands, their heads shaded by their tails. Doubtless their ancestors held the whole land thereabouts, and the fruits thereof, in feudal tenure from the Creator, before Giovanni Verazzani sailed up the river that now bears Hudson's name.

The Italian Consulate was then in 69th Street. I sometimes strolled up there, coming out of Central Park, to go and pick up Guido Colonna. There were always four negresses walking round and round with expressionless faces, like Chang the elephant in his cage. They carried placards on which was written : 'Hands off Ethiopia !' I wondered if they knew that the Abyssinians were more nearly related to the Jews than to them, and that darkies were bought and sold as slaves in Ethiopia !

One woman, not a negress, asked to see some official in the Consulate and was received by Guido Colonna. She then gave expression to her political opinions by throwing a bottle of ink over his tweed suit.

It is odd that America—perhaps the most truly hospitable country in the world—should be so full of people who are in a hurry to hate. In the nineteenth century, the foreign immigrant was told that, if he wanted to be a true American, it was England that he must hate. 'To twist the Lion's tail' became a national sport, and Theodore Roosevelt made good use of the ill-feeling, to build up a real navy.

When I arrived in New York, we Italians were the principal objects of animosity. A first deliberate injury was done us by discriminating against the Italian immigration quota (this was done by selecting the most unfavourable years, on which to base the estimate of that quota). Thus our country was deprived of that export of services, which had been a major asset in balancing our budget of international payments. Then came the prohibitive duties of the Smoot-Hawley tariff, in which a deadly blow was dealt to our exports even on such uncompetitive items as olive-oil and pecorino cheese. Yet, at that time, Italy purchased from the U.S.A. four times as much as she sold. It is this sort of economic pressure that forces a country to seek territorial expansion, as a means to procure raw materials and markets.

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Then, in June 1935, with no attempt at justification, American banks cut off all commercial credits, at the instigation of British bankers, in an attempt to exercise further pressure on the Italian government, in its colonial policies. This economic warfare was in no way dissimilar to that which the French government waged against the Austrian government, in 1931, forcing it to abandon the tariff-union with Germany, that seemed to be the only way that might allow Austria to continue to exist economically (the episode greatly strengthened the hands of the Nazi extremists in Austria).

There is nothing new in the use of money-power, in time of peace, to produce a catastrophe in a rival nation. But Dante tells us it *was* new in his time :

Già si solea con le spade far guerra :
Ma or si fa togliendo or qui, or quivi
Lo pan ch'el Pio Padre a nessun serra.[1]

Letters from my Skyscraper

NEW YORK, *September 1935*

This must be the first time I write to you from a skyscraper. I call it that, but it does not really puncture the clouds. It is merely a very tall house, and I live on the eighth floor, which, of course, is nothing. When I look out of my window in 46th Street, I see the towers of Manhattan foreshortened. In the evening, when there is a mist, they have something spectral about them. Fifth Avenue reminds me of the Yangtze Gorges : the same precipitous sides to the canyon, and peaks disappearing in the clouds above. Instead of seething waters, the stream of traffic.

They seem to consider me here as a sort of ' ambassador at large ', and the management of the hotel have put me into a suite of rooms, worthy of a delegation. There is an electric clock in every room, each marking a slightly different hour, but all animated by a jerky movement, like a hiccup.

On the whole, I find so much luxury depressing. My sitting-room is uncompromisingly tidy. If I could persuade Margherita to come down from Cape Cod, things might be livelier. These rooms would have flowers in them, and boxes of chocolate, novels, fashion-papers, and so on. When I come home, and enter the little entrance-hall, I would be met by whiffs of

[1] In other days, one made war with the sword ; now it is waged by taking away, sometimes here, sometimes there, the bread that Our Father in Heaven would deny to no one.

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scent and cigarette-smoke. A gramophone would be pouring out the latest tunes. There might even be a dog, causing trouble.

But, of course, my expenses would be trebled! I can imagine Diana, emerging through that door, leading now to an unoccupied bedroom:

'Papa! There's a lovely evening frock at the corner shop in Forty-seventh Street; black veil over painted chiffon. Do you think I might . . .'

I wonder if it wouldn't have been cheaper, in the long run, if we had sons, and not daughters. The latter are always wanting frocks, and stockings, and undies . . . But I suppose, if they had been sons, I would have to keep them, and also pay for frocks, and stockings, and undies, for ladies that were no relations of mine!

BLUEMONT
VIRGINIA, *September 1935*

I came up here, via Washington, to stay with the Ambassador, Augusto Rosso. Margherita is here too.

Rosso and I had never met before. He is very popular—so I am told. A quiet, prudent, pleasant man, too modern to be spoken of as belonging to 'the old school'. But with all the experience of a career diplomat. He is a bachelor, and his family, at present, consists only of two dogs, spaniels, called Tobia and Tobiola, with whom, needless to say, I immediately made friends.

Margherita rides Rosso's horse, *Water Baby*, and disappears down in the Shenandoah Valley, where there are grasslands. Up at Bluemont, it is all woods and steep hills. There is nobody here except our host, ourselves, part of the embassy staff, and Bergamaschi, who came over with me on the *Rex*. In the evening, Bergamaschi plays the piano, Margherita curls up on the sofa and knits, and I and Rosso talk shop.

When I read books on contemporary American politics, I feel I cannot see the wood for the trees. Too many details and minor issues. What I want are long views. I find something of this sort in articles by Bernard Fay, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. There is one in the May number, from which I have copied out the following paragraph:

L'Amérique peut, avec ses immenses richesses et sa population relativement faible, organiser son territoire en sorte que chaque American puisse réellement jouir d'un bien-etre considérable et d'avantages que nulle autre pays ne possède. Mais elle peut seulement le faire si elle procède avec grand soin, et si elle ne gaspille plus. . . . Cette refonte de la civilisation est impérieuse et urgente, à moins que ne survienne une guerre.

Strange to find a foreign author suggesting that another war might save the American economy from disaster, whereas the greater part of this country is pacifist to the core. Whether the government is as peace-loving as it makes itself out to be, is a matter on which I could not hazard an opinion. Before I left New York, a business man (from Chicago) said to me:

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'Our government has built up enormous stocks of cotton, to help the southern planters. It has bought up wheat and silver, and has buried underground most of the gold in the world. What are we going to do with all this? Only if there is a war, would these things come in useful.

'THE MAYFLOWER'
WASHINGTON D.C., *September 1935*

I am on my way back to N.Y.C. and Margherita to Cape Cod. It is pouring with rain. Migone has lent Margherita a car. She drives about in it and gets lost. This morning she got stuck in a 'circle', coming out of 16th Street. Every now and then she put her face out of the window and hailed a passer-by, saying 'Kertukkety! Kertukkety!', which was the nearest she could remember to Connecticut Avenue. Seeing a policeman, who appeared to be off duty, she suggested he should get into the car and show her the way. He accepted with alacrity, and even proposed that they should do a little sight-seeing together. When he heard she was a Countess, he was much impressed and took her to the White House. Margherita says he was a nice 'cop', but the rain off his waterproof cape ran down on the seat of the car, and wet her behind.

NEW YORK, *September 1935*

Having been asked, by Mr. William T. Dewart, to meet him at the offices of the *Sun* in Broadway, to go on with him to lunch at the Hardware Club, and Broadway being only a couple of blocks from here, I imagined, in my innocence, that I could stroll out of the hotel about half-past twelve and be on the spot at one o'clock. Luckily I met Monsieur Albous in the hall and asked him how long it would take to walk. He answered: 'About two hours, or more.' I jumped into a taxi and got there just in time. Broadway is about fifty miles long!

The N.B.C. people (National Broadcasting Company) asked me to give an address on the Ethiopian question, which I did last night. I was shown into a room with leaden doors, weighing a ton each, and had fourteen minutes and a half in which to speak. Broadcasting is useful in teaching one to avoid useless verbiage. If my 'time on the air' had been paid for (which it was not —neither was I!) it would have cost 8,000 dollars. No previous quarter of an hour of my life has ever been so costly!

Though I have not used it much hitherto, I now discover that the argument that seems to appeal most to the American mentality is the following:

"If you look up any international almanac (say the *Almanach de Gotha*) for the years 1890 to 1896, you will find that Ethiopia figures as an Italian dependency. When the Abyssinians refused to abide by the Treaty of Uccialli, signed in 1889, we lost our hold in an unsuccessful colonial war, just as the English lost their hold on the Sudan. They reconquered their former possession, and an Italian army protected the British advance, acting

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as a bulwark on their left flank. The reconquest of the Sudan is considered, by the British, as a national glory. Our move, to follow their example, is condemned as an international crime. They justify this discrepancy by claiming that they have created a new morality, dating from 1920."

NEW YORK, *October 1935*

There is an *Italo-American Society* here, which pursues, rather timidly, the laudable object of promoting good relations between the two countries. One of the people who run it is young Sorbello. He wanted to interview me for a magazine edited by the Society. I had no objection, but when he asked me for my 'impressions of America', I jibbed. What can it matter to the American reader what some fool foreigner, just off the gangway and through the custom-house, thinks of American cooking and the American climate? So I offered to give Sorbello my impressions about American dogs. I am sure there are more Scotties in Central Park than there are north of the Tweed.

And in that town a dog was found
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp and hound
And curs of low degree.

When I arrive up at the Embassy in Washington, Tobia and Tobiola stand with their front paws on the railing of the outer gate, or prance round me in the entrance hall, suggesting that I should take them along Sixteenth Street to the public gardens. They have long since discovered how dog-ridden I am.

A week ago, Margherita and I went for a week end to Oyster Bay to stay with Colonel and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Junr. An Alsatian, belonging to the household, insisted on taking walks with me. And all the dogs in the vicinity would join the party, so that, by the time I'd been out an hour, I was followed by a varied and obstreperous pack that, as O'Henry puts it, made the cats in that district grateful that prehensile claws had been given them.

After the walk was over, the dogs (all but the original nucleus) dispersed to their homes. What is the reason for such abnormal sociability of dogs in America? Can it be that their masters don't walk any more?

Sorbello wanted an illustration for my 'interview'. And just behind the St. Gaudens statue of Sherman we found a negro chauffeur with a kind of fox-terrier on the leash. We asked him what the dog's name was and he said: 'Husky.' We then asked if he would lend us Husky for a minute, as we wanted to photograph him. The chauffeur seemed much astonished, for Husky was certainly not a prize specimen, but he raised no objection. Husky and I posed, while Sorbello squatted on the grass near the pony-ride, with his pocket camera pressed against his cheek. He kept on shouting: 'Hold it, Husky!' like an operator to a film-star. Husky held it all right; that is to say, he held his hind leg up against a low wooden pointer in the grass, with

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CAFETERIA written on it. And thus we were immortalized together. I hope the members of the *Italo-American Society* will be impressed and that my interview, complete with illustration, will contribute to promote good relations between the two countries.

NEW YORK, *October 1935*

Margherita is in New York again. We are asked to stay with Rosso once more and shall be going to Washington in a few days. The idea is that Margherita should ride *Water Baby* in the horse show.

We have been to lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Griswold. What impressed us both was the fact that we got out of our taxi and entered a hall-door that opened on the street. From there we passed into the entrance hall and walked up a carpeted stair to the first floor, where the drawing room and dining room were situated. This may not seem remarkable to you, for it happens quite often when we go out to lunch in Rome. But you must remember that the Griswold mansion is on Park Avenue, where most of the houses have thirty-five floors, or more. To waste such valuable ground-space on a house of only two or three floors is the height of extravagance.

Margherita found a kindred spirit in Frank Griswold (though I think he might have been her grandfather). He had hunted in Rome, when her father-in-law, Pompeo Campello, was M.F.H. They talked 'horses' all the time they sat together at lunch.

I sat next to Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt. I don't know if there are two ladies of this name. If so, it was the elder one. She told me that, when she was a baby, King George V had pushed her in her pram. It was not clear to me whether the point of this story was the narrator's familiarity with the British royal family, or merely a question of age. . . . Perhaps I did not understand her rightly. Maybe it was she who had pushed him in his pram. . . .

Afterwards I went to see Doctor Nicholas Murray Butler, President of the Columbia University. His doings and writings and his academic titles occupy two pages of the American *Who's Who*. It is the fashion to poke fun at him. But I found him very pleasant, and he gave me an excellent piece of advice. I told him that I had been asked to speak on the radio, giving my opinion on the Neutrality Act and on President Roosevelt's policy. He said: 'Better not speak on the politics of the country you are in. It is bad taste. So it is to speak badly, when abroad, of the policies followed by your own government at home.'

It is a pity that so few people are wise enough to abstain from these two errors of *savoir faire*.

NEW YORK, *October, 1935*

People in the States seem to me to take an exaggerated view of the political situation abroad. Or perhaps it is that they prefer indignation to understanding. To hear them talk, you would think that we were at war with England.

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Even the State Department in Washington seems to consider that this is so. I have been asked to speak to the officers of the General Staff, about our military operations in Abyssinia. But the State Department put its veto, and explained to our Ambassador that it would be unfair for me to speak, whereas there was no one to speak 'for England'. Rosso answered that he had understood it was Ethiopia we were at war with, not England!

Such being the case, and having been asked to speak again on the radio (this time from the WOR broadcasting station), I took it on myself to asure the Americans that a great part of the British public and public men, were perfectly fairminded and understanding towards our action in Abyssinia. There is also a section of the British Press that upholds the Italian point of view, in the conviction that it would be in the true interest of the British Empire, as of European peace, to maintain friendly relations with Italy, and come to some agreement with us on the matter of resuming the old position, as between 1889 and 1896, when Ethiopia was a dependency of ours. I have been told that Sir Samuel Hoare, himself, is of this opinion, but not being certain of the fact, of course I could not mention it.

Anyhow, I quoted Lord Rothermere:

'*White men and women can now travel unescorted and by motor-car throughout the whole length and breadth of Africa, with the exception of one solitary corner. That corner is Abyssinia, whose borders are still occupied by savage tribes, which require their young men to prove that they have killed and mutilated an adversary, before they are allowed to marry.*

'*All sound-thinking Britons will wish Italy well in the great undertaking to which she has set her hand. The day that Mussolini establishes Italian authority over the ancient but barbaric land of Ethiopia will complete the beneficial progress by which Europe has brought law, order and public health to a continent, which less than a century ago was plunged in primitive misery.*'

ITALIAN EMBASSY
WASHINGTON D.C., *October*

There is a large photograph of Margherita in the *Washington Times*, taking *Water Baby* over some hurdles.

Water Baby is a fine horse, but untrained for horse-shows. Margherita was schooling him over the more complicated jumps. He had never seen a 'cage' before, and the result was that he fell and Margherita broke a finger. She went on for two days as if nothing had happened, but in the end had to give it up and retire to bed with fever.

I had arranged to run up to Boston for two days, which worried Rosso very much. He could not be left alone—so he said—with a pretty woman staying in the house with him. Margherita, on the other hand, refused to move. She said she was very comfortable where she was, and if she did not mind about *her* reputation, why should Rosso be so fussy about *his*?

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MARGHERITA

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It ended by Margherita getting her own way, and sticking to her room and bed. But to save appearances, during my absence, Rosso asked Rebecca Wellington, who acts as his 'social secretary', to stay there too, and occupy the other bed in Margherita's room. And there I found them, when I got back.

In a few days we return to New York, and should sail for Europe on the *Conte di Savoia*, on the 2nd of November. By the tenth or eleventh, I may be with you, in Rome.

London during the Abyssinian Crisis

> It is not Carnegie's millions, nor millions added to those millions, that can kill war and bring peace. It is a just weight and a just measure in international politics.
>
> DAVID LUBIN (on the erection of the Peace Palace at the Hague).

WHILE in London, in the spring of '35, I promised, rather reluctantly, to give a lecture, next autumn, at Chatham House, otherwise the Royal Institute for Foreign Affairs, in St. James's Square. I am inclined to agree with Stephen Leacock that most of us tire of a lecture in ten minutes and that sensible people don't go to lectures at all. But apparently there are other people, who are not sensible, and they take to lectures as a duckling to a pond. Count Kayserling once spoke to me about his countrymen's mania for attending lectures. He said: 'Imagine a German walking up a stair, on the top of which is a landing with two doors. Over one door is the legend ENTRANCE TO PARADISE. Pinned to the other door is a notice that a lecture is about to be given there, about how Paradise is laid out and administered. The German would make for the lecture-room. Paradise itself might wait. . . .'

The subject of my lecture was to be 'British Foreign Policy Through Italian Eyes'. It was put off because I had gone to the States, and this might have offered an excuse for not giving it at all. British public opinion had been worked up into one of those moral rages that have something biblical about them, so that it would seem as if they could only be stilled by a casting out of devils. A mere lecture seemed utterly inadequate. On the other hand, the business of stepping out on a little platform, with a false air of a conjurer, and being introduced to the audience by somebody saying: 'We have

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with us tonight . . .' promised to be more exciting than such moments usually are. If it had not been so, I doubt if I would have crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic (I had not finished my business in U.S.A.), for an hour's talk in a lecture-room.

Italy's expansion overseas had represented, since my first youth, an *apologia pro vita mea*; it was a form of rebellion against the conception of Italians as a picturesque people who will work in mines abroad, and in other people's colonies, for a few pence a day. But I was told that aspirations such as mine were obsolete. Mussolini's move into Abyssinia was denounced as 'a callous anachronism', incompatible with contemporary ethics. It was time to stop it. The natural law of conflict and survival had been replaced by more modern methods. This had not been the case, even recently, as long as British interests, French interests, Spanish interests, Russian and Japanese interests (in Asia), had been at stake. The conquests of greater powers had been whitewashed. Only Italy might be condemned as 'an aggressor'. Here is the reasoning of the reformed criminal, eager to stick to the loot.

On my part, I considered as 'a callous anachronism', the smug, selfish policy that denied to a hard-working, thrifty, sober people like the Italians, the possibility of earning their living in their own currency, under their own flag, in undeveloped lands beyond the seas. Pantaleoni was right: this was the philosophy of Scrooge in *Christmas Carol*.

The dispute had its comic side. I was much amused at a conversation between Lady Oxford (Margot Asquith) and Leonardo Vitetti, Councillor of the Italian Embassy. She maintained that, whereas the Italian advance in Abyssinia was morally indefensible, the campaigns that had founded the British Empire could not be criticized on moral grounds. Vitetti answered:

'My dear Lady Oxford, I am a catholic. As such, I believe in the Immaculate Conception. But I accept it as a dogma connected with the birth of Christ, not of the British Empire!'

In those days Italians were repeatedly admonished to revert to the liberal, peaceful politics of Giuseppe Mazzini.

The austere and schoolmasterly remoteness of this rebuke was marred by ignorance of Mazzini's ideals.

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In the year 1871, just after Rome had become the capital of United Italy, the principal newspaper in the Eternal City was the *Roma del Popolo*, and Mazzini used to write for it. In three successive articles (dated 22nd and 29th March, and 5th April) he claimed for Italy the right to contribute to the work of civilizing African regions, and he pointed out that, just as Morocco pertains to the Iberian peninsula, and Algeria to France, Tunis which is only twenty-five leagues from Sicily, obviously pertains to Italy. The prosperity of Tunisia was due, in great part, to Italian emigrants, who greatly outnumbered the foreign population of any other nation in the Regency.[1]

Except in such political seers as Mazzini himself, there was, in his day, no conscient ' colonial policy ' among Italians, no ' imperialism ' in the modern sense of the word. But the same urge that impelled American frontiersmen to press on beyond the ranges, impelled Italian peasants, during the nineteenth century, to set forth in feluccas with lateen sails, from the ports of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Kingdom of Sardinia, to seek a new home along the Northern coasts of Africa, the natural outlet for our exhuberant population. Our claim for colonies has ever been justified by the urgent want of the humbler classes, eager for opportunity to work. Oscar Wilde's jibe, that his countrymen carried the white man's burden only as far as the Stock Exchange, could never have been levelled against the Italians.

A century-old, spontaneous gravitation proves how we have need of Africa. For us, the desire for expansion overseas, the hunger for land, does not represent a policy, but an instinctive effort to preserve the life of the nation. Anyone who valued our friendship, should have taken this need into account. Our emigrants settled with their families in Tunisia, and developed the land. But the fruit of their industry was wrested from them, to be exploited by a foreign power

[1] Here are Mazzini's own words in the original Italian :

" Nel moto inevitabile che chiama l'Europa ad incivilire le regioni africane, come il Marocco spetta alla Penisola Iberica e l'Algeria alla Francia, Tunisi, chiave del Mediterraneo Centrale, connessa al sistema sardo-sìculo e lontana un venticinque leghe dalla Sicilia, spetta visibilmente all'Italia.

" E sulle cime dell'Atlante sventolò la bandiera di Roma, quando, rovesciata Cartagine, il Mediterraneo si chiamò Mare Nostrum. Fummo padroni, fino al V secolo di tutta quella regione.

" Oggi i Francesi l'adocchiano e l'avranno fra non molto se noi non l'abbiamo."

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that faked a pretext to plant a ' protecting ' flag on the territory that had been fertilized by the labour of Italian peasants. British acquiescence was bought at the price of France's consent to the occupation of Cyprus, at the time of the Congress of Berlin. Thus Italians were taught the bitter lesson that expansion in its most peaceable form is not possible in a world full of political intrigue and greed.

The ever-recurring policy of those foreign powers that deny to Italians a right to colonize has sought to justify itself by many specious pleas. Even now, after the second world war, I read in an English publication called *The Price of Peace*, a condemnation of ' the greed of the Italians ', who ask for a return of their former colonies. Is there anything morally iniquitous in wanting a colony ? And does it behove an Englishman to say so ?

In Harold Nicholson's *Life* of his father, Lord Carnock, he mentions an occasion when some Foreign Office official was declaiming in righteous indignation against Italy's occupation of Tripoli. He was startled to find himself checked by a flash of sudden wrath in the blue eyes of his Chief. ' It is not for us,' said Arthur Nicholson, ' to cast that sort of stone.'

Had fewer of such stones been thrown at us, during the following decades, the traditional Anglo-Italian friendliness might have survived.[1]

* * *

One of the arguments put forward to deny us the right to colonize is that Italy is too poor. This thesis was brought forward, after the second world war, to justify taking away from the ' poor ' Italians the territories on which they had made a notable outlay of capital, which was thus rendered a total loss. Mr. James T. Byrnes uses this argument, in his *Speaking Frankly*. He adds that Italy's record of administering colonies was one ' of inefficiency and oppression '. Mr.

[1] I would like to quote, here, a remark made to me by Bettina, while we were together, in London, during the Abyssinian crisis. She said :

' The English never will understand that any policy of theirs can be provocative. They are always satisfied that anything *they* do is merely what every decent person would do under the circumstances, and they feel hurt when other people do not see things in the same light.'

We both noticed, Bettina and I, in after years, that the British resented our remembering sanctions, when they, themselves, had forgotten all about them.

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Byrnes evidently does not speak from first-hand knowledge. It is not difficult to guess the source of his information. The same sources of information were placed at the disposal of the natives of Tripolitania and other African territories formerly governed by Italians. They were told that, in the 'Peace Treaty', Italy had formally renounced all right to colonies. This being so, it was useless to ask for the return of an Italian administration. It was outside the alternatives of option, and this by the express wish of the Italians themselves. I do not think I have ever come across a meaner piece of lying propaganda.

Italians are, in some ways, better colonists than the British. In other ways, they cannot compare with them. One, or two, British officials can administer enormous territories of African territory, and keep order therein. I doubt if any Italian administrator could equal their efficiency. But Italians colonize in a different way. They work on the land, and they settle on the land as labourers, and get to love it because of their toil. Englishmen don't usually colonize in order to find opportunities for manual labour.

The merits of the Italians as colonizers was officially admitted and stressed, at the conclusion of the eighth International Congress of Tropical and Sub-Tropical Agriculture, which met in 1939. The United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and fourteen other states were represented. At the close of this Congress, Professor Edmund Laplae, President of the International Scientific Association for the Agriculture of Hot Countries, made a speech in which he said:

> The representatives of the colonial countries, which can boast the oldest traditions, cannot but recognize that Italy has accomplished in Libya a work that opens up new horizons to colonial activities, directing them not only on the lines which will promote the increase of production and the revival of land but also and above all the progress of the native population and the spread of civilization.

* * *

The subject of this chapter is one that I have very much at heart. The reader must forgive me if I dwell on it at length and recall some historical data, which are not known to the Man in the Street.

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In 1906, an agreement was signed between Great Britain, France and Italy, defining the limits of their respective spheres of interest in Ethiopia, in view of the probability of that ramshackle empire falling to pieces. This Tripartite Agreement was renewed from time to time, but it might have been expected to lapse automatically after Ethiopia had been admitted into the League of Nations. Lord Curzon expressed the opinion that it had died a natural death. But it was obvious that the possibility of the empire disintegrating had not disappeared, simply because the Negus was now represented at Geneva. His suzerainty, in his own kingdom, was little more than nominal.

The admittance of Ethiopia into the League was the *fons et origo mali*, the original mistake, from which so many subsequent troubles inevitably arose. The responsibility for this error belongs to France.

The French author, Henri de Monfried, wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* of August 1935 :

> In bringing Ethiopia into the League, France did her the worst service imaginable, since it involved both a perversion of truth and the foisting upon that unhappy country, in the fullness of innocence, of charges and obligations, which she could never hope to fulfil.

It is well-known that the Negus had to hide from his chieftains the commitments, which he had entered into at Geneva, and from Geneva the real conditions of his country, as described by Lady Simon, and in Henry Darley's book, *Slaves and Ivory*. That a country where slavery is not only tolerated but where taxes might be paid in slaves, should be a member of the League of Nations, on the same footing as Switzerland and Sweden, is one of those inconsistencies of contemporary politics, that are only possible as long as the general public does not understand the situation, and does not want to understand it.

In his work on Italy in Africa Christopher Hollis writes that the French move to admit Ethiopia into the League was " a proposal of cynicism and outrage against any true principles upon which the League professed to be built ". And he adds that it was " confessedly put forward in order to keep the Italians out ". I, myself, heard some

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French diplomats put forward as their motive that of keeping the British out ! And they spoke of Sir Sidney Barton as having been appointed British Minister in Addis Ababa to prepare a virtual annexation of Abyssinia ! Some years later I lunched with Barton at the Travellers Club (I had known him well in China), and I asked him if the French suspicions were well founded. He seemed more amused than surprised, and said that his task of influencing the Negus had been much facilitated by the recall of the Italian Minister, Giuliano Cora : ' Cora had them all sitting in his lap ! ' As to the motives that inspired his own appointment to Ethiopia, Barton said that they might have been justified by the kindly desire, on the part of the Foreign Office, to give him a post where he should not be obliged to spend too much money !

The British Government strenuously opposed the admittance of Ethiopia into the League, and in this it showed itself foresighted and consistent. It would have been wiser on our part, if we Italians had followed the British lead. But at that time we were endeavouring to negotiate a Pact of Friendship with the Negus. This would have been utterly impossible if we had opposed his request for membership in the League.

Even after an Ethiopian delegate had been admitted to represent his country in the annual Assemblies of the League, the British Government continued to anticipate a possible dismemberment of that tottering empire, and though not seeking to hasten its demise, they apparently thought it prudent to be ready for it. In 1925, Sir Ronald Graham, British Ambassador in Rome, initiated a correspondence with our Ministero degli Affari Esteri, referring to the old Tripartite Agreement, as if it were still in force.

The French Quai d'Orsay was only informed later of this correspondence, and reacted with considerable resentment. Not to be surpassed in the gentle art of double-crossing their friends, the French informed the Negus that negotiations were going on behind his back. . . . Ras Tafari, justly incensed, essayed a protest, but his *démarche* came to nothing ; after which, the French, fearing that they might be left out in the cold, gave up their self-righteous attitude and renewed their agreement with the other two interested powers.

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Such items of backstair history were of little use to me, in defending Italy's action, at Chatham House. But they gave rise to a doubt whether we could not have gained our point by demonstrating, at Geneva itself, that Ethiopia had not fulfilled, and could not fulfil, the conditions on which she had been admitted into the League. In proof of which, Great Britain herself had shown that she considered the question of a future dismemberment still open.

As so often happens, the international question was soon submerged by considerations of home politics. While I had been over in the States, Mr. Baldwin's government showed that its principal anxiety was to ensure votes in the coming parliamentary election. That pestilential organization, called the ' League of Nations Union ', animated by the zeal that Talleyrand deplored, organized a straw vote, in which the public was asked several garbled questions that practically amounted to the query : ' Do you prefer peace or war ? ' There could only be one answer. And it was this cheap little electioneering stunt that ultimately led to ' sanctions ' and to much that followed, even after the ill-feeling over Abyssinia had died down.

Let me add a comment of Monsieur André Tardieu's (quoted by the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of the 15th January 1936) : ' *Chaque fois qu'elle n'a pas cru ses propres intérèts engagées, l'Angleterre n'a pas cherché de fortifier la Sociètè des Nations.*'

* * *

It is customary for a lecturer, at a meeting at Chatham House, to be the guest of some prominent member of the Institute. On the evening of the 19th of November, Bettina and I dined with Lord Howard of Penrith. As Sir Esme Howard, he had been British Ambassador in Washington. Lady Howard was Italian born (a Princess Giustiniani-Bandini).

At the lecture, an old friend was in the Chair : Sir Ronald Graham. He introduced me in a graceful, witty little speech, pulling my leg in the kindest way. He was glad I had come to England to speak about British foreign policy. He, himself, had been mixed up in British foreign politics during many years, but had never been able to make head or tail of them. He took them as a matter of faith. . . .

No need to give a resumé of my speech. Italy was being calum-

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niated in those days, and the Italians were victims of every kind of abusive propaganda. The buttons were off the foils, and I struck back. I maintained that no more cruel insult had ever been levelled at a proud and sensitive nation than the assertion, repeatedly made by British statesmen, that the Ethiopian question offered 'a test case' for the League. The British government thought that the time had come to test the efficiency of the Covenant, by making an experiment on the vile body of a friend. Italy was the rat for vivisection, the guinea-pig, on which to try the virus of sanctions! To test the efficiency of the League, a black people were egged on to fight against a white. All the power and prestige of Great Britain were brought to bear against her ally in the Great War, and in favour of a people who mutilate their prisoners and sell small children in the slave-market.

I pointed out how the British moral indignation was selective. No action had been proposed, or taken, when the Polish general Zeligowski forcibly occupied Wilna, in defiance of the League. Nor was anything done when Japan occupied Manchuria. As Garvin wrote, in the *Observer*: "You do not come into court with clean hands, when you mete out one measure to an Eastern power that appears too formidable to be opposed, and another to an European power who you think might be weak enough to be cowed into submission."

You might think, when reading this page, that the tone of the meeting was heated and acrimonious. Far from it! In verbal discussion much depends on the tone of the voice. Mine was gentle and slightly mocking, as if I were merely poking fun at my audience. And the audience itself was cordial and perfectly good-tempered. The British feel a chivalrous and sportsmanlike sympathy for anyone who stands up fearlessly for his own side. For this same reason, our Ambassador, Grandi, was personally very popular in London during the Abyssinian crisis.

When my lecture was over, a sort of general mêlée followed. Old Admiral Freemantle started to speak, and was obviously intending to be critical, but before he could get down to brass tacks, he got mixed up with another member, who shouted 'Malta!' There followed a row about Malta, though nobody seemed to know why, for nothing had been said about that island, one way or another. A

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gentleman named Victor Fisher, with a moustache and imperial, like the Frenchman in a detective story, came in on my side with an extraordinary speech, like the charge of the Light Brigade, in the course of which he said: 'Coming generations in this country will be able to say of *our* generation that England stood four square to all the winds of heaven, in favour of torture and emasculation.'

Another member—his name was given as Mr. G. Edinger—came out with the following:

'The sudden information that Italy must expand or explode has taken people in England by surprise. Italy has got on very well for many years without African colonies. She has free access to all the raw materials of the world at the same price as the British.'

If the necessity, in less than three decades, of sending abroad (and losing as Italian citizens) fourteen million emigrants, to earn the bread they could not find at home, can be described as 'getting on very well', Mr. G. Edinger was right. His argument about raw materials reminds me of a saying of Walter Bagehote's, that poverty always seems an anomaly to the rich. They find it difficult to make out why people who want dinner do not ring the bell. It is true that raw materials can be bought.[1] It has taken a second world war to show the British what a difference it makes to be able, or not, to buy in your own currency. John Quincy Adams was right when he said: 'No expedient ever devised could equal a debased currency for fertilizing the rich man's field with the sweat of the poor man's brow.'

* * *

"We pay our Bishops to shew us how to gain Heaven, not how to lose Singapore." This quotation, out of Sir Barry Domville's book, *From Admiral to Cabin Boy*, comes very apt, when describing the attitude of the Archbishops of Canterbury and of York during the Abyssinian crisis. The former certainly was never at a loss for the wrong word, and both were animated by the proverbial ferocity of non-combatants.

[1] In 1920, at the first Assembly of the League of Nations, the Italian Delegate, Tomaso Tittoni, attempted to submit the two major problems of our foreign policy: the pacific expansion of our population and the supply of raw materials. His plea was ruled out of order.

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But, in spite of the lead given by its chiefs, the Anglican clergy was divided. Lord William Cecil, Bishop of Exeter, wrote a letter to the papers, in which he said :

> There is a type of English individual who is a public danger. He loves either by pen or speech to express his opinions on the moral iniquities of other nations. If he would express it from the point of view of the fellow sinner, if he would point out that we English are much to blame by reserving great territories both in Australia and elsewhere, which we cannot pretend to cultivate, while Italy and other overcrowded nations cannot find room to expand, he might produce an atmosphere of peace. But, on the contrary, he will thank God that he is not as other men are. And from this high moral altitude he will administer rebukes that will cause the most profound irritation. When he does not rebuke, he will patronize. . . .
>
> The League of Nations is quite on the right lines, but its weakness is that it does not go far enough. I believe that Italy ought not to have been allowed to feel the necessity of expansion. In peace time we should be trying to build up the prosperity of our neighbours. And we should find that that ended in our own prosperity.

Such were the views of those Englishmen who did not deliberately blind themselves to the truth that Italy's need of expansion had been made more urgent by the ruthless closing of outlets to our emigration, and the high tariff policies that raised everywhere a Great Wall of China against our produce. Our move into Abyssinia was not so much a war as the desperate sortie from a beleaguered city.

Austen Chamberlain, with whom I discussed the situation, was naturally unwilling to give away his nationals. But he said mildly : '*I* would not have chosen to champion the Ethiopians. They are not good neighbours.' They were, indeed, such bad neighbours that their proximity cost the neighbouring British dependencies some £100,000 annually to repel the raids of savage tribes : those tribes that—as Lord Rothermere pointed out—required their young men to prove that they had killed and mutilated an adversary before they were allowed to marry ! Austen Chamberlain said to me that both Great Britain and Italy would have done well to invoke what was then called ' the Titulescu formula ', against a people that made a practice of invading their neighbour's territory.

Sir Austen's attitude was that of an expert in international affairs, who was also well up in modern history. What he most feared—

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and he made no mystery of his anxiety—was that Italy be thrown into the arms of Germany, just as she had been in 1881, when the French faked a pretext to occupy Tunisia. On that occasion, Italy had been pushed into the Triple Alliance. Something similar might happen again.

Judging the situation from another standpoint, Sir John Maffey, one of the principal British experts in colonial matters, showed himself by no means hostile to the Italians. He was the author of 'the Maffey Report' (carefully hidden from the British public), which concluded that it might not be disadvantageous to Great Britain if the Italians occupied Ethiopia. The fact that these two men, Chamberlain and Maffey, expressing the views of experienced British politicians and officialdom, should both have taken such a moderate view of the situation, is a proof, in my opinion, of the following truism. As long as each nation limits itself (as, for example, the Swiss do) to defending its own national interests, there is not much difficulty, among reasonable people, in coming to an agreement over controversial questions. But when nations start crusades to attack, or to defend, an ideology, or an institution, such as Fascism, Communism, Democracy, or the League of Nations, the seeds of strife are sown over a broader field, and the danger of war is multiplied a thousandfold. It brings us back to the wars of religion, as in the Middle Ages.

Like Lord Palmerston, we may not attribute much value to 'friendship' between nations. Yet it is true that there was once what the Marchese Imperiali used to call 'a perfume' that hung about the relations between England and Italy. No amount of direct bickering between Whitehall and Palazzo Chigi could have destroyed that perfume. The ill-wind of sanctions blew it away.

During the Ethiopian crisis, if the Italian government remonstrated with the British government about their unexpectedly unfriendly attitude, they were assured that Great Britain was really their friend. If we remonstrated at Geneva concerning the exaggerated venom against us in the proceedings of the League of Nations, we were assured, by each single delegation, that it was England that had bribed or blackmailed them into following a policy which they deprecated. Mr. Anthony Eden was compared to Shere Khan, the lame tiger, going to the Council Rock, to ask that Mowgli be handed

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over to him. Valconcellos and Titulescu vied with one another for the part of Tabacqui, the jackal.

Could this have happened in the days of the old diplomacy?

The only one ultimately to benefit was Adolf Hitler.

Even 'sanctions' were nothing new to the Italians. Foreign nations had been imposing them for some time, with Exclusion Acts, Imperial Preference and other forms of economic hostility. Applied, as they were, half-heartedly, their only effect—as Winston Churchill points out in his War Memoirs—was to arouse 'the undying hatred of the Italians'.

* * *

Like myself, Alberto Pirelli went to London, during the Abyssinian crisis, at his own initiative. He invited Sir Arthur Salter, Walter Layton and Josiah Stamp to a small dinner, and did his best to induce them to stop the Press campaign in England. In his book, *Personality in Politics*, Salter admits that he was moved by Pirelli's plea, when he said:

'We can't go back. Everyone knows that we have sent an expedition. We thought we had your tacit acquiescence. We went to the Conference of Stresa expecting to learn England's real attitude. We had assured ourselves of Laval's acquiescence. We knew that you knew that our military stores were already going through the Suez Canal. We knew that you wanted us to be on your side in an issue with Hitler, and we thought it likely that you were prepared to acquiesce in our Abyssinian venture as the price. When your Ministers said nothing, we thought we could rely at least on being safe from active intervention.'

Sir Arthur Salter goes on to tell how he felt sufficiently disturbed to go privately to Ramsay MacDonald and to ask him whether it was in fact true that he had said nothing about Abyssinia. MacDonald replied that, on the contrary, Foreign Office experts had been taken out especially and had made contact with their opposite numbers. Sir Arthur insisted in his question: "I said that what Pirelli alleged was that no British *Minister* had said anything—on a question of obviously outstanding importance."

To this MacDonald replied that he, himself, was completely preoccupied with the main problem, that of Germany. He did not know if Sir John Simon had raised the question of Abyssinia.

* * *

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During the Abyssinian crisis, a British author, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, was writing *Left Wings Over Europe*, a book that was published (by Jonathan Cape) before the Italian conquest of Ethiopia was an accomplished fact. This work contains a very remarkable prediction. In describing, as a contemporary event, the cleavage that came about in international relations, in the years 1935–36, it points out that this cleavage foreshadows a far more serious split in Europe, between East and West. The distant origins of what was afterwards called 'The Iron Curtain' go back to the days when the Russian Delegate at the Council of the League of Nations, Mr. Litvinov, found a heaven-sent opportunity for intrigue and mischief-making, while he posed among his colleagues at Geneva as the staunchest Covenanter of them all! World war number two has since then given a geographical definition to what has long been a world-wide schism. Mr. Wyndham Lewis, writing in 1935, has a chapter called 'The great fissure that has appeared in European society in our time'.

We all know now how it came about that, some time after the U.S.A. and Great Britain had agreed, at Yalta, to hand over to Russian domination Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (including Albania and Italian cities on the Adriatic) there arose a sharp division between the extreme form of internationalism, which is best expressed by Moscow, and the other political trends that can be grouped under the general term of 'Fascist', as misused by the gentlemen of the Left. We have heard this term 'Fascist' applied to the U.S.A., by communist Ministers in Sofia and Belgrade.

There is nothing new in this. The phenomenon was evident, in the embryo stage, even during the Abyssinian crisis. To illustrate it, the author of *Left Wings Over Europe* mentions Sir Walter Citrine, who said to his followers at the Trade Union Congress at Brighton, in 1935: 'Defend Abyssinia—by doing so, you will be defending Russia!'

Mr. Lewis also quotes an article in the weekly, *Great Britain and the East*, published during the early days of the Abyssinian campaign:

> There is a wider, more ominous, shadow, which people in this country may not fully realize, but which is weighing heavily with continental statesmen. This consists in nothing else than the possibility, should the war in Ethiopia endure for any considerable time, and should the accompanying

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economic sanctions endure for approximately the same length of time, that the particular issue between Italy and the League might be converted into a general issue between Fascism and its variations, and the Second or Third International and *its* variations.

Commenting on the above, Mr. Wyndham Lewis points out how, according to this classification, His Britannic Majesty's Government comes under the heading of one of 'the variations of the Third International'.

* * *

I do not believe that Pirelli, or I, cut much ice, when trying to influence people that were sitting in arm-chairs and reading the papers. But in Africa the facts themselves gained us the support of people on the spot. At one time, the American Foreign Correspondent, Webb Miller, shared the animosity that British propaganda so ably fostered against Italian expansion. What he saw for himself, while 'covering' the campaign in Ethiopia, diluted this ill-feeling. And he came to the conclusion that the Italian invasion was no less and no more reprehensible than the series of unprovoked aggressions and land-grabs, by which England, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Germany gobbled up the continent of Africa.

What I myself had been trying to say I found expressed, better than I could have done, in the last chapter of Evelyn Waugh's *Waugh in Abyssinia*. This chapter is called 'The Road' and it describes the Italians, sturdy and indefatigable men, employed in hard manual labour, in the construction of motor-roads where, up till then, there had been nothing but rough bridle-paths for pack-mules. The idea of conquering a country in order to work there represented a new idea in Africa. Such a novel kind of conquest was rather shocking to the other imperial races, and quite incomprehensible to the Ethiopians, for whom the fruit of victory is leisure.

English colonization was the expansion of a ruling class, but the Italian occupation of African lands had a broader basis. Commenting upon our type of colonization, Evelyn Waugh writes:

> It began with fighting, but it is not a military movement, like the French occupation of Morocco. It began with the annexation of potential sources of wealth, but it is not a capitalistic movement, like the occupation of the South African gold-fields. It is being attended by the spread of order and decency, education and medicine, in a disgraceful place.

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He goes on to compare this advance to the great Western drive of the American peoples, dispossessing the Indian tribes, to establish new pastures and cities in a barren land.

Back in my Skyscraper

DURING my earlier stay in the U.S.A., I had declined to make a tour of lectures, as I was often asked to do. While on my way back to New York (where my book, *The Last Empress*, was in the throes of publication) I decided that I had better accept any similar offers that might be made to me. Judging by the success that my modest efforts had obtained so far, this was perhaps the best way to pull my weight.

So, when I got back, on Xmas Eve, to my skyscraper, I called up the Italian Embassy in Washington on the 'phone, to inform them that I was once again in the States, and that my services were at their disposal, if required. It was the Councillor, Rossi Longhi, who answered my call, and his advice was as follows.

'The best thing *you* can do,' he said, 'is to keep quiet. No radio talks, no speeches, no interviews, no articles in the papers. Show yourself around, answer questions if they ask any, but don't take the initiative. Just walk about and smile!'

'That suits me all right. What's the bright idea?'

'The English are doing our propaganda for us. That is to say, they are over-doing their own. Every journalist, every Bishop, every minor politician, thinks that the moment has come to make a lecture tour in the U.S.A., and to instruct the Americans as to what they should do. People here are fed up with them.'

I don't know whether it was a mere coincidence but just at that time, I read a novel by Wodehouse, called *The Girl on the Boat*, and this is what I found in it:

> About this time, there was a good deal of suffering in the United States, for nearly every boat that arrived from England was bringing a fresh swarm of British lecturers to the country. Novelists, poets, scientists, philosophers and plain ordinary bores; some herd instinct seemed to affect them all simultaneously. . . . On this one point the intellectuals of Great Britain were single-minded: that there was easy money to be picked up on the lecture

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platforms of America, and that they might just as well grab it as the next person.

This being the case, I took things very leisurely, and went to stay once more with Rosso, at the Embassy. The following is an extract from a letter of mine to Bettina :

ITALIAN EMBASSY
WASHINGTON D.C. *2nd January 1936*

The Ambassador was out somewhere, and Rossi Longhi came and dined here to keep me company. He tells me that his little boy goes to a school where there are pupils of different nationalities, besides Americans. The American children boycott him, because he is Italian. The result is that his only playfellows are the Germans. Exactly the same thing is happening in the field of high international politics. We are being thrust into the arms of Hitler, whereas a little *savoir faire*, on the part of England and the states she influences, might hold Italy to the side of her former Allies in the world war.

I have met the Grand Old Man of American journalism, Frank H. Simonds, and he asked me to lunch with him. I had some difficulty in finding his house in P. Street, as the rain poured down on the wind-screen of my car (or rather Rosso's car) in such a torrential flood that it was almost impossible to see out.

I have jotted down some of the things that Simonds said to me :

'The economic nationalism of the richer powers may lead to another war.'

'When you Italians ask for "vital spaces", you are only voicing a general plea, and the aspirations of the rich states as well as of the poor. World communications being what they now are, it is absurd to divide the world up into independent, self-contained estates. Some plan should be sought to do away with frontiers, at least in the field of economics. At present only the poorer states are reacting against a policy, which all the world will some day discover to be suicidal.'

'This economic nationalism, among the more prosperous powers, serves indirectly to foster Communism, or Fascism, within the borders of less fortunate states. To consider such ideologies merely as the outcome of human error or wickedness is childish. They are the consequence of weakness in the social order.'

Since lunching with Frank Simonds in Washington (it was just a month before his death) I have seen his *obiter dicta* quoted in many books, for example, in Sir Norman Angell's *The Steep Places*. Here, Frank Simonds's opinions, and those of Mr. Leland Stowe, as of the American Foreign Policy Association, not to mention Lindbergh and

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an un-named Judge of the American Supreme Court, are carefully selected to show that they are all based upon a fallacy. For Sir Norman Angell, the truth is simple and visible ; Britain does not own her Empire ; it is not her property. She has governed and governs a rapidly decreasing area of it. But she owns none of it. Nine-tenths of the arguments put forward by people like Frank Simonds, Mr. Leland Stowe (he might have added : by Daniele Varè) are due—so Norman Angell tells us—to a crude confusion between the meaning of the word ' own ' and ' govern '.

In describing as a myth the economic advantages possessed by the ' Have ' powers, over the ' Have not's ', Sir Norman Angell is guilty, himself, of a fallacy, or at least he shows himself sadly behind the times. It may be perfectly true, as he so persuasively maintains, that the causes of war are often psychological rather than economic. Indeed, if it were not so, why should countries like Italy and Jugoslavia be eternally quarrelling among themselves, when it would be to their mutual interest for each to furnish to the other what they respectively lack ? But the contention that a change of rulers makes no difference to the proprietors of the land, in a territory that passes from one sovereignty to another, may have been well-founded during the Napoleonic wars, when Goethe travelled in Lorraine, but it is certainly not true in our day.

Almost contemporaneously with the publication of Sir Norman Angell's *Steep Places*, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article " The Swarming of the Slavs ", by Demaree Bess. It was illustrated with photographs, showing how Germans and Hungarians were expelled from Czechoslovakia and forced to abandon the territory where they had lived for generations, in order that the ' victors ' might create an exclusively Slav State.

I have watched the S.S. *Roma* drop anchor before ' le Zattere ' in Venice, to disembark Italian peasants, with their families and such poor goods and chattels as they could bring with them, so that the ' victorious ' Jugoslavs might possess themselves of the farms, the forests, the mineral resources of Istria. Refugees from Zara (a typically Italian town, with a typically Italian population) came to me, in my house in Rome, to describe atrocities which were much worse than the *dragonnades* that followed, in seventeenth-century

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France, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, obliging the Huguenots to flee to England, Holland and Brandenburg. (Nowadays, we would have called them displaced persons.)

So again, after the French had hounded most of the poorer Italian residents out of Tunisia, I used to visit, in hospital, one of their number, an old woman of over seventy, who had tried to commit suicide by throwing herself out of a window. She had no one to turn to in the country of her origin, and what help the Italian authorities could give her was inadequate. She had not succeeded in killing herself; only in breaking both her legs. It is charitable to assume that a would-be suicide is of unsound mind, and the old woman had been taken to the provincial mental home of St. Elisabeth, on the top of Monte Mario, near Rome.

She had passed all her life in Tunisia, and having been forced to leave as soon as the war was over, she felt that she had no other home. When I saw her last, she still longed for death.

* * *

Frank Simonds was a better informed writer than most journalists and politicians. He was one of the few people I have met, who had ever heard of the Italian proposal for a 'triangular collaboration in colonial matters'. This project was submitted, as far back as 1925, by the Italian Delegate, de Michelis, to the *Bureau International du Travail*, in Geneva. Countries that were suffering from demographic pressure were to contribute labour; countries with unexploited territories and raw materials were to contribute these; countries with capital to invest were to finance the enterprise. Each of the three was to be entitled to a share of the produce. In this way, a consortium would have combined the different forms of production.

The idea was given favourable consideration by the *Comité d'Etudes pour une Union Européenne*, presided over by Briand, and later by Herriot. The former was personally favourable, but he could not forego a characteristic jibe. He said to Count Sforza, then our Ambassador in Paris: 'What you want is that we should contribute colonies, while you contribute a consortium!'

Simonds had heard of the project through the *Institut de Hautes Études Internationales*, established in Geneva. He pointed out to me

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how the idea of a consortium had been insufficiently advertised. The general public, which is always on the side of the best publicity, never heard of it. Yet Albert Thomas, the French labour leader and Trade Unionist, had spoken at length and with a well-considered optimism of this proposal, in his last report, concluding the activities of the sixteenth Session of the International Labour Conference (1932). He compared it to the projects of Saint Simon, founder of French socialism, and follower of Lafayette.

Some such collaboration in the administration of African territories will have to be carried out in the interests of economic justice.

* * *

One of the first people I met, during my sojourn in the States, was Mrs. William Brown Meloney, who edited the weekly magazine of the *N.Y. Herald Tribune*. Her initial interest in me was based on a misunderstanding. We found ourselves seated next to one another at a dinner-party. She turned to me with a pleased expression and said: 'I know your name. You have written a religious book, haven't you?'

'A religious book . . . Me? No!'

She had been in London and had seen various publishers, in order to find out if there were any book, recently published in England, that she might bring out in serial form, in her magazine. One of the books sent to her by Methuen had been discarded by her secretary, because—as she informed Mrs. Brown Meloney—it was a religious book. The title was *The Maker of Heavenly Trousers*.

The fact that she travelled to Europe with a Secretary (however inefficient) showed me that the lady I was sitting next to at dinner must be an important person, and I soon discovered that Mrs. William Brown Meloney was very influential indeed. Her power in the land lay in the fact that she was a woman. She told me this herself.

And she accused us Italians of not thinking enough about women. This astonished me, for I have heard people say that we think of nothing else. There was an old gentleman in Venice (a relation of mine) who, in his youth, had travelled round the world merely to find out what the women were like in different countries. But Mrs. Meloney regarded the question from a different angle. She

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told me that eighty per cent of the money spent in the U.S.A. is spent by women. Eight million women support their families. They represent, to a remarkable degree, the intellectual life of the nation.

Yet when Claudel was French Ambassador in Washington, he once declared that there *were* no women in America: '*Elles sont des flappères. Et quand elles cessent d'etre des flappères, elles deviennent des Daughters of ze Revolution*!'

It was through Mrs. Brown Meloney that I made the acquaintance of Professor James T. Shotwell, of Columbia University. I had heard a lot about him in Europe, as being one of those responsible for the Briand-Kellogg Pact to outlaw war.

As Professor Shotwell first suggested, this should have been a bilateral agreement, limited to France and to America. In such a form, it merely put into words what was a generally accepted fact, a point already gained in the progress of the world's history. No one could conceive a war breaking out between France and the United States.

The idea of extending the scope of the proposed pact to other states is due to Senator Borah, though it must have been obvious that any extension of the bilateral agreement, as originally proposed by Shotwell, must lend to making it less, and not more, efficacious. Senator Moses is quoted as having exclaimed: 'Let's extend it to all nations, and get rid of the dam' thing!'

I once discussed the Briand-Kellogg Pact with Arthur Henderson, who had attended the ceremony of the signature in Paris, in the same Salle de l'Horloge, where the Covenant of the League of Nations had been signed, ten years before. He declared that it was dishonest and unfair to public opinion, to pretend that any such document could have practical value, in the dangerous atmosphere of international politics. Bernard Shaw described it as a step backward towards war, instead of a giant stride towards peace. And President Coolidge was sceptical.

My own feelings towards it were inspired by a certain resentment. While attempting the impossible, the Briand-Kellogg Pact renounced much that was necessary. (In this, it resembled proposals like total disarmament: perfectly safe to make, as they are certain to be rejected.) After the signing of the Pact, the powers gave up all the good work

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that was being done (at the initiative of the United States), to render illegal, in international law, the more inhuman and brutal methods of warfare, such as attacks by air on the civilian population. Negotiations already begun, to attain this object, were first suspended and then abandoned. The Briand-Kellogg Pact had outlawed war, therefore war itself could not be subjected to laws. To make new laws for warfare would have been equivalent to a breach of faith. So we returned to the mentality that preceded the Thirty Years War, before Grotius wrote *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*.

Professor Shotwell's innocent and practical suggestion, to outlaw war between two friendly nations, was destined to have some unexpected consequences.

More Letters from my Skyscraper

NEW YORK, *Thursday, 9th January 1936*

I arrived here yesterday evening by the 'Congressional' from Washington, and the first person I met, this morning, was a ghost: the ghost of an old gentleman, with a drooping moustache, bushy eyebrows and a corn-cob pipe. I had last met him in Rome in 1897. I mean the ghost of Mark Twain.

Blasts of icy wind, sweeping down Fifth Avenue, drove me in through the doors of the Public Library, where, on the ground floor, is housed the 'Mark Twain Centenary Exhibit'. Many of his relics were affectionately collected there, and among them I found the little poem by Owen Seaman, written after Mark Twain's death, and published in *Punch*:

> Pilot of many pilgrims since the shout
> 'Mark twain!' that serves you for a deathless sign,
> On Mississippi waterways rang out
> Over the plummet's line.
>
> Still where the countless ripples laugh above
> The blue of halcyon seas, long may you keep
> Your course unbroken, buoyed upon a love
> Ten thousand fathoms deep!

It was through a girl friend of mine, Elsa Grant, that I wangled an invitation to accompany her, her father, and Mr. Clemens in the family landau that trundled about the streets of Rome in a leisurely way and took us to the Vatican. In the Sistine Chapel, our American guest stared at the 'Day of Judgment' and remarked: 'The healthiest place to stay, in Michelangelo's time, must have been a tomb!' And indeed it is true that, in the huge fresco

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behind the altar, the reincarnated souls, emerging from their sepulchres, have the muscular figures of athletes and the brown limbs of bathers on summer beaches.

During tea in Mr. Grant's apartment in the Palazzo Salviati, I asked the author about the almost medieval feud, between the Grangefords and the Shepherdsons (in *Huckleberry Finn*), those two aristocratic families of a past Mississippi civilization. The story might have been transplanted from the banks of the river Adige, where Montacutes and Capulets waged war on one another, to the sorrow of Romeo and Juliet. Mark Twain assured us that such a feud, ' under the old code ', was just what he had described it to be, down to the shooting, from the river bank, of a wounded boy, who is trying to swim to safety. There is something Homeric about that story. Does Mark Twain's ghost now hob-nob, I wonder, with that of Homer *κατ' ἀσφοδελὸν λειμωνα*?

NEW YORK, *Wednesday, 15th January 1936*

Sacha Jacovleff is here and came to see me. He has given up his studio in Paris and now teaches drawing in some Art Academy in Boston. He is up in New York for a few days, arranging for a ' one man show ' of his works at the Knoedler galleries. Jacovleff is doing well in the U.S.A. He passes most of his time, in New York, in the monkey house of the miniature Zoological Gardens at the Fifth Avenue entrance to Central Park. He is trying to do a portrait of a monkey called Woolly. But Woolly objects and spits at Jacovleff from the upper railings of his cage. At first he missed by a yard or so, but now he has got the range. Jacovleff cleans up his jacket with a pocket handkerchief and grumbles : ' *Ce cochon a appris à viser juste !* '

My sympathies are entirely with Woolly. It must be exasperating to be shut up in a small cage, to be stared at and painted. . . . And Jacovleff is doing a very good likeness. He has caught the almost human expression that yet is not quite human, and the angry sadness of the eyes !

Yesterday evening I dined, as I often do, at the Oyster Bar of the Grand Central. It has the advantage of being close by and nicely warmed. You can walk about there in comfort, even when there is a blizzard raging outside. I like to see the American youth returning from their winter sports, by the evening trains. There is snow on their caps and on the skis that they carry on their shoulders. The girls have red cheeks (and sometimes red noses) and very often they are limping from a fall.

I discovered that the waiters at the long tables with swivel-back chairs are mostly Spaniards. One of these worthies offered me a dish that sounded very indigestible and not very appetizing. I answered that I would not risk it : ' *Tengo miedo* ! '

A woman who was sitting opposite promptly asked me if I were a Spaniard. I did not wish to enter into conversation, so I merely shook my head. But she insisted : ' French ? ' Again I made a sign in the negative.

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'English?'

'No.'

'German?'

'I am Italian.'

She looked at me as though I had revealed some dire misfortune, and said: 'How pleased you must feel to be over here in a civilized country!'

The poor woman—I am sure—meant no offence. She probably thought she was being kind and tactful. And anyway she is spoon-fed by a propaganda that finds it convenient to put on the same level the countrymen of Dante, of Columbus, of Michelangelo and Leonardo, of Galileo and Volta and Marconi, with a conglomeration of African tribes—the only people that still practice slavery on a large scale and who emasculate their prisoners of war!

YALE

From rooms in a college in the
University (I don't know which)
17th January 1936

I am the guest here of Peter Belin and some fellow students, who have generously given up to me, to sleep in, a tiny room, chock-full of clothes, books and sporting trophies. My hosts asked me if I wanted to talk (meaning, I suppose, to give a lecture of sorts). On my answering, 'No!' they seemed much relieved. If I had been the guest of 'the faculty', I would have had to take myself seriously. But the learned Professors do not even know that I am here, which is all to the good. I attended a history class, just to see what they were teaching, and had some difficulty in recognizing the French Revolution names, translated into English. I have been given to understand that Yale is poor, when compared to Harvard. I wish we had some such poverty in the shadow of the two leaning towers, at the University of Bologna.

LAMSON HOUSE

SOUTH HAMILTON MASS., *18th January 1936*

Left New Haven in a blizzard, lunched at Boston and came down here in the evening. The countryside is deep in snow.

I passed the middle of the day, in Boston, with Jacovleff, who took me to his studio. He has found a lovely model here. There are drawings of her all over the place.

I am beginning to realize that my ideas of America are as out of date as the slang of the eighteen-eighties, or the legendary notice: 'Don't shoot the pianist. He's doing his best!' The telephone, the cinema, the radio, the dude-ranch and the frigidaire, have created a new America. Something of the older one is left here and there: the little town, all a-rustle in summer with elm-leaves, all white and glistening with snow in winter (as now); a place of home-staying people, who squirt their hoses on front lawns in the

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evening, and sit and gossip on a back-porch, and eat creamed chicken and waffles and soda-biscuits ; where ladies go a-marketing with a basket, and the young people eat molasses candy, even if they no longer sing part-songs.

Life today in the small towns that dot the asphalted roads is doubtless more pleasant than it used to be. And people are just as hospitable and friendly as the old folks one used to read about in books. But where is ' Main Street ' ? I have not come across it yet. Or perhaps it is that I find the same atmosphere as in English cathedral-towns, or in the Alban Hills. Main Street now runs round the world.

NEW YORK, *16th February 1936*

Very hard frost. A hydrant has burst not far from this hotel, and the frozen spout is about sixteen feet high ; it looks like a Xmas tree. The papers publish photos of ships coming into port, smothered in icicles. It is warmer in Central Park and out in the country than in the New York streets.

I have been out once more to see the Oyster Bay Roosevelts (Teddy and his wife). My hosts were just the same as ever, both talking nineteen to the dozen. Teddy with no waistcoat (in this cold !) ; his jacket standing well away from his collar and tie, and every now and then looking at his wife across the dinner-table, as if he were frightened of her. But he kept on telling stories, to poke fun at her. One of them was about the ' Preparedness Parade ' (just before America came into the war—some time in 1917). It was a gigantic procession up Fifth Avenue. Mrs. Roosevelt (Elinòr, as he calls her, with the accent on the o) was ' Marshal ' of ' The Patriotic Women of America '. There were to have been no less than 3,500 of them : Elinòr at the head of the procession, and Daisy Harriman behind her, carrying a large banner. But, owing to a sudden change of plans by the organizing committee, there was a hitch down the line. The band passed, playing hard. Then came Elinòr, stiff as a ram-rod, looking very military and wearing a broad white band across her chest, with ' Marshal ' written on it. Then came Daisy Harriman bearing the standard with ' Patriotic Women of America ' on it. And then . . . nothing at all ! Though unaware of the fact, they had got separated from their following ; there was no one on the asphalt road behind them. The ' Patriotic Women of America ' were reduced to two !

After lunch, Teddy gave me a definition of the difference between totalitarian and democratic régimes. He said : ' In totalitarian states, you cannot say, or do, what you like. In democratic states, you may say what you like, as long as you do what you're told.'

It was odd to see Oyster Bay again under deep snow, even the sea. The bay was frozen solid, and boulders of ice stuck out, here and there, from under the snow. The trees loomed through a grey mist, as in a Japanese print.

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NEW YORK, *17th February 1936*

New York is indulging in a 'permanent (cold) wave'. Sleet, snow and rain. Then hard frost and an icy wind. Madison Avenue is as slippery as the 'Cresta Run' at St. Moritz.

Henry R. Luce and Laird S. Goldsborough came to lunch today. Luce is the founder of *Time*, and Goldsborough a foreign editor.

It was interesting to meet Luce (I knew Goldsborough already), but our lunch was not a success. We had a table in the corner of a small dining room, and waited an interminable time for what we had severally ordered. At last, our waiter came in with a tray, tripped over something at the door, and spread-eagled himself over the room, with all he carried. Another twenty minutes passed before we got anything to eat. By that time, we were all three so faint with hunger that we could hardly speak politely to one another. The smell of food from the other tables, all around, was tantalizing. I made some inane remark about the Americans not being 'military minded'. Luce said it would be a grave mistake to count on this, and he foresaw that, before many years were over, the Americans would be caught up and swept away by some powerful wave of emotionalism, that might carry them almost anywhere and in no predictable direction.

Another American super-journalist, whom I have met in these days, is the 'columnist', Brisbane. He owns the 'Ritz Tower', next door to this hotel. Also some land, I didn't understand where, that he wants to people with Italians, whom he considers good citizens (Al Capone notwithstanding).

He predicts that the war in Abyssinia will be over in a few months. On the other hand, President Roosevelt—so Brisbane says—predicts that it will last for years and fizzle out through inanition of the Italians.

I asked where President Roosevelt got his information, and Brisbane said: 'From the English General Staff. He would do better to take it from the American General Staff.'

NEW YORK, *18th February 1936*

I hear that the 'Universal Service' news agency is sending representatives to Europe, on the assumption that there will be war there in March.

Though I have known Nora Iasigi (that was) ever since we were in our teens, I had never met her husband, William Marshal Bullitt. He asked me to dine at the Union Club, a sumptuous repast in a private room, with caviare, bisque, roast quails, ice-cream and wonderful wines. I gathered that my host is a 'corporation lawyer'. And two of the other guests were high up in the legal profession.

One of them gave me news of Judge Bassett Moore, whom I met when he was the first U.S. member of the World Court at the Hague. Apparently he is still going strong, though seventy-five years old.

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He was one of the shining lights in International Law, when I was a student at the University. I remember pouring over his monumental *Digest*, and enjoying his articles in *Harper's Magazine*. He wrote on such subjects as 'The Beginnings of American Diplomacy', and 'The United States as a World Power'. He seems to have been something of a pioneer, for in those days very few people in America seemed to think that they needed a diplomacy at all, unless it was to present their wives and daughters to the English Court. I hear that, as an authority on International Law, Judge Bassett Moore now disapproves of 'sanctions' and expresses strong doubt as to their legal justification. Two years before the present trouble began, that is to say in 1933, he maintained that the new internationalism's efforts to guarantee peace would merely assure the world-wide scope of future wars.

One might say of Judge Bassett Moore what Talleyrand said of Alexander Hamilton: '*Il avait deviné l'Europe.*'

NEW YORK, *29th February 1936*

Salvador Madariaga is here in New York. I had not seen him since we were both at the League of Nations in Geneva. Some Association of Women's Clubs has invited him to come over, paying his expenses and housing him on the thirty-fourth floor of the Sherry-Netherlands building, under (or above) the apartment for which Mary Pickford pays some fabulous rent. I accuse him of living 'in guilty splendour'.

If the women's clubs had known Madariaga as well as I do, I doubt they would have asked him to lecture to them. He is far too unbiassed in his opinions, and—like myself—does not take anything, not even high politics—very seriously. At the Disarmament Conference, he was considered rather an *enfant terrible*, especially when he ridiculed the Russian proposal for total disarmament all round. He compared Russia to a huge bear, suggesting that teeth and claws and talons should be abolished, and that all the animals should come together and give each other 'a good hug'.

Today we were comparing the English and the American mentalities. I remarked that both felt the necessity of assuming an attitude of moral superiority. 'Quite true,' said Madariaga, 'but the English get away with it. The Americans don't!'

From this, we got on the subject of oligarchies. He said:

'All governments are oligarchies. You can appoint them by putting bits of paper in a ballot-box, or by giving your opponents castor-oil. It is not proved that the latter method is necessarily the worst. Personally I prefer Mussolini to Bill Thompson!'

'Big Bill' Thompson, Mayor of Chicago, became famous overnight by saying he wanted to give His Majesty King George 'a punch on the snoot'.

To explain such animosity, it was pointed out that in English school books, such as Schlesinger's *New View-points in American History*, George Washington

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is described as a rebel against the British Crown : a sure proof that such text-books are designed to poison the innocent minds of American children !

This is the story as generally told and accepted. But did the Mayor really mean King George V of England ?

I have heard quite another version of the story : namely that ' King George ' was the nickname of a political boss in Chicago—and a priest withal !—against whom Big Bill Thompson has a grudge. Hence his remark about the punch in the snoot.

His words having been taken for a crime of *lèse majesté*, the Mayor was far too clever to clear up the misunderstanding and explain what he really meant. The story of a tiff with King George was excellent publicity. So he left it at that !

POST-CARD FROM NEWHAVEN, CONN., *3rd March 1936*

Came here to see our Consul, de Cicco. He took me to a meeting of the local Rotary Club. They asked me a lot of questions about Abyssinia and ended up by bursting into song :

Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day !

I believe this is what they call ' community singing ! '

I hear there is a strike of elevator boys in New York. I am booked to dine with Mich Davenport (editor of *Fortune*). He lives on the fourteenth floor. I hope I will not have to walk upstairs !

NEW YORK, *7th March 1936*

Vecchiotti (our Consul General) took me to a meeting of the Foreign Policy Association at the Hotel Astoria, in Times Square. These meetings in which I have no obligation to put myself forward (I only answered a few questions) are quite enjoyable, and I learn a lot about public opinion in the U.S.A.

The best speech of the evening was made by a negro, who said he was an Abyssinian, but he spoke the language of Harlem. He brought forward an unanswerable argument, when he asked : ' What fault is it of ours that so many babies are born in Italy ? '

I went and congratulated him afterwards.

Anyway, Abyssinia is no longer in the news. There is trouble nearer home, since German troops have crossed the bridges over the Rhine and marched into the ' demilitarized ' territory on the left bank. I seem to remember that this was foreseen by a journalist in Washington—Constantine Brown, (the foreign-editor of the *Washington Star*). He considered it inevitable that

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the Germans would take some advantage out of the sanctions racket which threatened to bring about a major war, in Europe, because we Italians had started a minor war in Africa.

American public opinion is much divided: for and against us. In spite of (or because of) the insistence of British propagandists to lead their Western cousins into the path of righteousness, there is here—as in France—a certain bias in our favour. It is perhaps an echo of their own 'frontier spirit', which claimed (I am quoting J. T. Adams's *Epic of America*, page 67) that:

"... it was against the law of God and nature that so much land should be idle while so many Christians wanted it to labour on and raise bread.'

And this is perhaps the only answer we can make to the negro's argument, as quoted above, that it is really no fault of the Ethiopians if so many babies are born in Italy.

POSTED IN NEW YORK, *Sunday evening, 8th March 1936*

I am writing to you in the train between Baltimore and New York. Our Consul at Baltimore was very pressing in an invitation to me to come and give a talk at the meeting of an 'Open Forum'. But, being new to Baltimore he had made a bad mistake. There is, I believe, quite an important institution there, which calls itself a Forum, but it was not the one I was taken to this afternoon.

We found ourselves in a slovenly suburban hall, very dingy and squalid, opening out on a street with cars clanging down it. A ragged individual at the door was selling communist pamphlets. The Secretary was an elderly woman, showing—as Oscar Wilde would say—the remains of a truly remarkable ugliness. Halfway through the meeting, someone went round with a hat, collecting money for the hire of the hall.

In this unexpected atmosphere I thoroughly enjoyed myself, but the audience took no interest in me whatever; they were all busy abusing President Roosevelt.

What little was said about foreign politics was the sort of thing you might expect from the politicians in a comic novel by Leacock. A little man, who represented—so I was told—the Carnegie Endowment, took Europe to task for not following the example of the various States that make up the Union, here in America. He told us how these states have many divergent interests in the matter of transport, water, forestry, hygiene, etc. But they don't go to war about them. (Yet I seem to remember that they *did* go to war about slavery!)

This self-righteous 'Professor' was evidently unconscious of the fact that the various races and nations and countries of Europe have different languages and possess a historical background, in which you may watch the Past acting on the Present. To quote one example, our frontiers are the result of historical events that go far back in history. They are often the result of an unjust peace,

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and therefore a cause of friction and unrest. History has a momentum, like that of a railway train in motion. You must take it into account, if you want to prevent accidents.

NEW YORK, *Tuesday, 10th March 1936*

This letter ought to catch the *Aquitania*. As soon as it is finished I will drop it in the tube that has an opening near my bedroom door and corresponds with the letter-box in the hall downstairs. I have the remains of a sore throat and will pass the afternoon at home, that is to say in my hotel sitting-room. Except to have tea, there will be nothing to do but write to you. So this letter is likely to be a long one.

I had lunch with Colonel William E. Donovan, a wealthy republican, who is just back from Abyssinia, where he toured all over the place and saw Badoglio, Castellani and all sorts of people. He is enthusiastic over the efficiency of the Italians and their morale. He has also been to Geneva, to Berlin and to Paris ; he has talked with Vansittart and various personalities . . . He says that the best way to persuade American public opinion that we have right on our side, will be to succeed in conquering Abyssinia. Most people judge the rights and wrongs of a question merely by its outcome. It is the victor by whom history is written, and defeat is the proof of wrong-doing. So it has always been and so it will always be.

Strange to say, the most interesting conversation I have had here in these last days has been with an elderly lady, whom I have known for years and who lives quite close to us in Rome ! I mean the Signora Olivia Agresti Rossetti.

She was first here in an official capacity just after the War, in 1920, or thereabouts, for the meeting of the International Labour Conference. This was called under the Treaty of Versailles though it so happened that when the Conference actually met, the Treaty of Versailles had been rejected by the Senate. The Conference founded the International Labour Office, which afterwards took up its duties in Geneva.

The Signora Agresti worked with the Italian delegate, Baldesi, a socialist and trade union representative. At her suggestion, he took up the question of raw materials and ocean freights : in the sense that the supply of raw materials and the cost of freight affect the standard of living (that is to say of employment), in the importing countries. Baldesi suggested some form of international supervision. He got the support of workmen's delegations, of employers' delegations and of several governments. But the whole British Empire (the governments, the employers and the trades unions) were dead against anything in the form of an international understanding on the subject. They formed a compact block against any threat to their national monopolies.

Today, the Signora Agresti is once more in America, preaching the same sermons against national monopolies, and once more her adversaries are the

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British and the British Colonials, who form a solid block in favour of a selfish policy that opposes any attempt of the Italians to obtain room for their growing population and free access to raw materials. This is what is at the bottom of the Abyssinian venture. And it is on this, exclusively economic side of the question, that the Signora Agresti has been lecturing in the United States. It is the most legitimate form of propaganda : that which stands up for the living wage—the standard of living—of the working classes in a country that is as poor as Italy.

The fact that the Signora Agresti is a niece of Dante Gabriele Rosetti confers on her a halo of inherited celebrity, even among people who have only the foggiest notion of who Dante Gabriele Rossetti was. A Chicago girl came up to her after a lecture and asked her to sign a copy of the *Divine Comedy*, under the impression that she was a niece of Dante Alighieri !

NEW YORK, *19th March 1936*

The following item of news appeared yesterday in the first (morning) edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*, but was omitted in the subsequent editions, presumably by request of the British diplomatic and consular authorities :

BRITISH WAR FILM CENSORED

Scenes Showing Natives Mowed Down in Africa Deleted

(*From the 'Herald Tribune' Bureau*)

" LONDON, March 17.—Scenes showing British machine-gunners mowing down Matabele natives in the film *Rhodes of Africa* were obligingly deleted today by Gaumont-British pictures, as a result of a suggestion from the Foreign Office.

" The scenes were not protested on the ground that they were untrue but that they were 'unfortunate' at this time, in view of the Italo-Abyssinian war.

" The Foreign Office evidently does not want to hear an Italian taunt that the Fascists are only following the example set them by the British to be borne out so graphically by one of their own films."[1]

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[1] The judgment expressed by the *Herald Tribune* is confirmed by G. K. Chesterton, in his own weekly newspaper (28th May 1936) :

" That ignorant insularity . . . is not content to make the Englishman the hero of every drama ; it makes him the old-fashioned hero of melodrama. And it makes every foreigner in turn not only a villain, but exactly the same villain in the same melodrama. . . .

" At the very moment when Mussolini is made a monster for annexing a small African state, our precious patriotic picture-makers produced a preposterous version of Cecil Rhodes and the annexation of the Boer State, in which the Kimberley millionaire is gazing at a vision in the manner of Sir Galahad."

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Home-coming (1936)

ALTHOUGH I had enjoyed my stay in New York, it was pleasant, on a sunny morning in March, to find myself speeding down West Street towards the Chelsea Piers, to embark on the *Conte di Savoia*.

There were the usual crowds to see people off, and parting gifts being taken into luggage-strewn cabins and state-rooms : bouquets of roses, boxes of chocolates, books, telegrams, kisses, tears. Elsie Torlonia gave me some cigarettes to take to her son. I warned her he was unlikely to get them (he didn't). I don't smoke, myself, but my daughters do.

During our passage home, Passerini, the Purser, with one eye partially obscured by a drooping eyelid, entertained the more privileged passengers with cocktail parties. The ' smart set ' included Elsa Maxwell, Grace Moore and Colonel and Madame Balsàn (*née* Consuelo Vanderbilt, formerly Duchess of Marlborough).

The facilities offered by modern science on luxury liners permitted me to hear Bettina's voice in Rome, through the telephone installed on the Captain's deck, near the radio station. And a pretty Italian girl conversed with a boy-friend, in camp, somewhere in Abyssinia. He confirmed the good news of the campaign's progress. Italy would soon have her colonial empire, the Promised Land I had always dreamt of. There would be room for her sons to work overseas, under their own flag.

We sailed into the Bay of Naples on a lovely April morning, between the violet valleys and the orange-groves, sloping down on every side. Bettina was waiting for me on the new pier. She had taken rooms at the Excelsior, and we motored out for lunch at Pompeii.

That spring-time arrival from abroad remains as one of the happiest memories of my life. The approaches to Italy are all beautiful, but the gates of heaven are from the Mediterranean : a blue robe, starred with white cities.

We drank white wine from a volcanic soil and ate home-made spaghetti, under whispering pines, within the sound of little waves breaking along the shore. Behind us rose the mountain under which,

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as tradition tells us, burn the fires of Phlegathon. Vineyards covered its fertile slopes, and wistaria cascaded over the ruined walls of the long-dead city, whose fate is an eternal warning of the transient nature of our joys and sorrows.

On getting back to the hotel, we met Pirandello in the entrance-hall. Even he seemed to have lost his habitual melancholy. How could it be otherwise, coming back to all the sunshine?

* * *

To my sorrow, I cannot close my Memoirs at this point! Only in fiction can we write a protecting *Finis*, to end a story before disillusion casts a shadow on the page. In real life, it must go on.

Like my father before me, I have known the bitter-sweet torment that goes with the harvesting of a dream. But he was more fortunate than I, for his dream was never shattered. Good fortune and the willing support of his countrymen helped Mussolini to conquer the Land of Canaan. Unfortunately, he failed to realize that a statesman's duty is not only to acquire, but also to preserve. By reason of his subsequent errors, the Italians remained in the Promised Land just long enough to show what they might have done there.

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